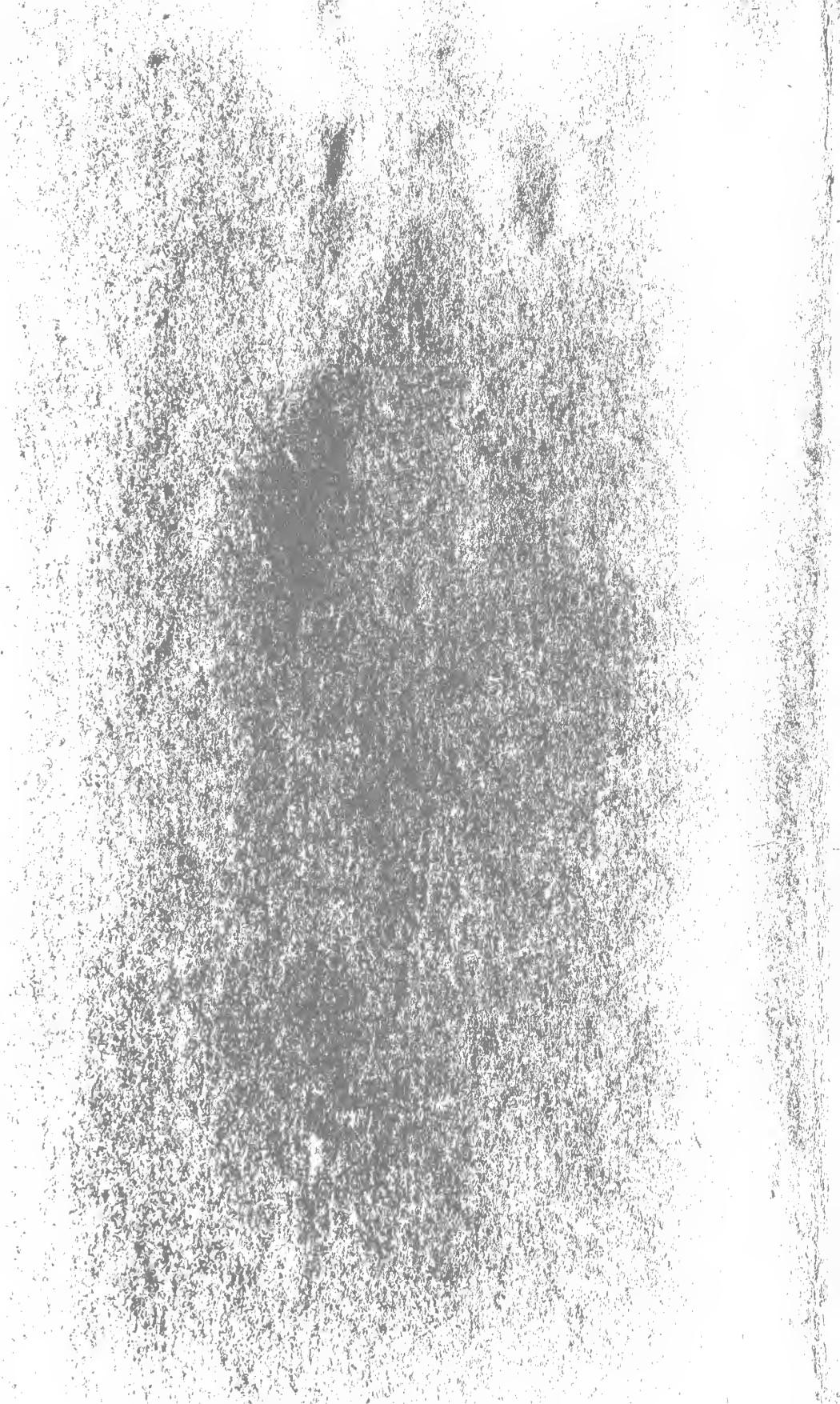


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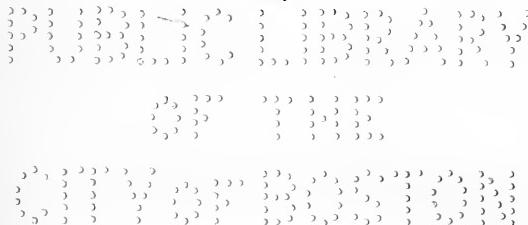
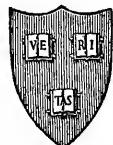
THE GEORGICS AND ECLOGUES OF VIRGIL

Vergilius Maro, Publius
TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH VERSE BY

THEODORE CHICKERING WILLIAMS

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY

GEORGE HERBERT PALMER



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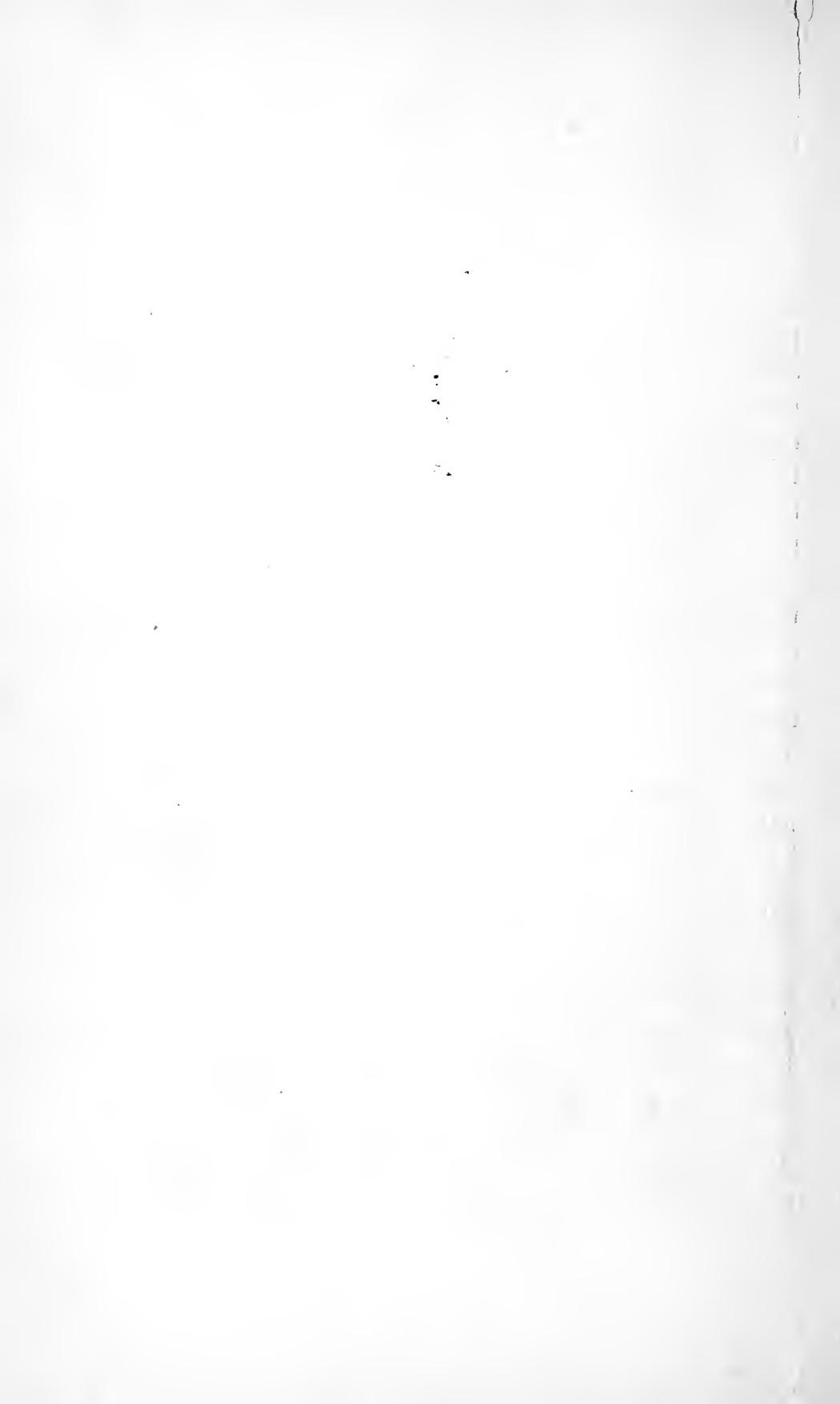
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THE
GEORGICS AND ECLOGUES
OF VIRGIL



INTRODUCTION

A PECULIAR pathos attaches to artistic work interrupted by death. Three weeks before Mr. Williams died he said to me joyfully, "I have reached the end of my *Georgics* and *Eclogues*. Of course all needs revision, and to that I shall at once address myself. But I wrote the last line today." It was too true. He never wrote another. His twenty years' companionship with Virgil was ended.

To this august and elusive poet he was early drawn, perhaps by a certain kinship of nature. In every time of fatigue, anxiety or affliction — and such times befell this eager and joyous spirit by no means rarely — Virgil became his refuge and solace. Turning a few pages of his sensitive Latin into his own hardly less sensitive English freed him from annoyance. In the Virgil classes of his two schools he had opportunity to try the effects of his work on young and groping minds. Accordingly, when in 1907, he published through the Houghton Mifflin Company his version of the *Aeneid*, it was at once acclaimed as an extraordinary performance. In a greater degree than any other translation of Virgil it harmonizes the conflicting claims of poetry and scholarship. One reads it as an English poem, heedless of a constraining original; yet the many shades of that original are reflected here with a fullness and accuracy unequalled even in prose. The

unit of meaning is not the single word, but the word in its connections, the sentence, sometimes the paragraph. The schoolboy may not be able to match words with Virgil, but Virgil employed words to convey a certain significance and beauty; the test of translation, as Williams understood it, is whether the English mind receives that significance and beauty. To reproduce the Latin means of conveying an impression, without conveying the impression itself, was, in Williams' judgment, pedantic folly. As a poet he felt, and could make others feel, the subtle suggestions of poetry, and he had lived so long with Latin that for him it had ceased to be a dead language. He wrote it, spoke it, thought in it. After reading a passage of Virgil, he could hold it in memory and could try renderings of it as he walked the streets. Love, therefore, a passion for beauty, and sympathy with an exalted thinker, have had more to do with shaping his version of the *Aeneid* than grammar or dictionary.

Naturally the piece to which Williams first addressed himself was that which embodies Virgil's maturest mind. When this was fully explored, he turned to study more minutely the stages through which that mind had passed. Fully recognizing the immaturity of the *Georgics* and *Eclogues*, he found them interesting on this very account, and believed others might find them so if he could present them properly. To that endeavor he gave all the time he could command during the last seven years of his life. Could he have had six months

more, all would have been brought to the standards of his own exacting taste.

Receiving his papers, I have merely attempted to set them in order for the press. After correcting the usual copyist's errors, I have chosen among the multitude of alternative readings those which seemed best to accord with Williams' mind, regardless of my own. His and my methods of composition are so unlike that I soon found it useless to attempt such a revision as he himself had planned. The taste of one writer cannot wisely be superposed on that of another. I am no Latinist, and patching such artistry at any one spot involved operations too wide either for my powers or my sense of rightful ownership. I have left the work, therefore, substantially as I found it. Through and through it is his.

Williams' estimate of Virgil is well stated in the preface to the Library edition of his *Aeneid*. In the preface to the Riverside edition he has stated it again. The earlier piece seems to me a more just and illuminating criticism of Virgil's strength and weakness than any of equal length with which I am acquainted. While acknowledging the enormous extent of Virgil's borrowings, he believed them to be shaped by a highly individual personality with a view to ends of its own. His fullest comment on the *Georgics* and *Eclogues*, and his indication of their place in the total scheme of Virgil's life, is best given in one of his unpublished papers. A summary of this will form an appropriate introduction to the present volume.

Virgil learned poetic craftsmanship under Alexandrine tutors, with whom scholarly reproduction of the literature of the past had superseded all desire for original creation. Plagiarism was systematized and honorable. We can best understand such ideals if we recall similar conditions in the Age of Elizabeth. To England the Renaissance came late and was already much more advanced on the Continent. Accordingly the English sonneteers of that day, seeing abundant beauty elsewhere, drew more than half their material from the riches of France and Italy. Still more submissive to foreign influence was Latin poetry in Virgil's time; for the Romans had less poetic impulse than the English, and the inherited beauty stored in Greece was still more overwhelming.

Among the traditional Greco-Roman themes was that of the idealized country. In the country it was thought one might lead the simple life; casting off the complex artificialities of the city, one might there experience elemental pleasures. Almost every age dreams such a dream and immediately proceeds to falsify it. The simplicity of the country is rude; the poet who presents it is tempted to adorn. Life in a cottage easily becomes a masquerade, with its own set of conventions more rigid and artificial than those of the city itself. No form of poetry is so unreal, so manifestly absurd as the finished pastoral. Occasionally it has furnished a good enough opportunity for the practice of youthful pens, as in the case of Spenser, Milton, and Pope.

But when employed by mature writers — as by Gray in the *Elegy*, Shenstone in the *Pastoral Ballad*, and Arnold in *Thyrsis* — it is apt to be transformed into something quite different, through the body of personal emotion which fills it.

Virgil's pastorals are both young and old. Genius and folly are intimately associated in them. For the most part they were written in Virgil's youth, when he was fascinated by Theocritus and was gaining flexibility of style by practising the literary modes of his day. They are his school-exercises, which have been taken far too seriously by posterity. Hardly any other body of ancient verse so small has exercised so large, and so doubtfully beneficial, an influence over the poetry of aftertime. But there is more in them than pleasing folly. Virgil was a genuine lover of the country, and his *Eclogues* contain delightful touches of nature. They abound too in skilful phrases, such as men like to remember and to quote. And then there are compassions and sympathies here which are truly Virgil's own and do not belong to the poets whom he imitates. Where before Virgil had pity appeared? With him it is everywhere. He knows the farmer's meagre lot. He hears the exile's bitter cry. The pangs of disprized love he paints with more truth than the pastoral requires. The perish-ing affairs of mortals move him to tears, yet do not breed despair. He is no pessimist. Better condi-tions are ever waiting. In the ardor of his hope and pity he is more allied with the Christian than with

the Greek temper. This Christianizing temper of pitying expectancy comes to fullest expression in the *Fourth Eclogue*.

This brief piece forms one of the notable enigmas of literature. To see in it a heralding of the Christ, as the Middle Ages did, is to perceive too much and to be too definite. To say with the German scholar that it is mere complimentary verse on the birth of a friend's child is to be no less erroneously definite. Who the infant was we had better not inquire, nor from what source the messianic adumbrations were drawn. Rome was pretty fully acquainted with oriental religions. What deserves attention is the young poet's faith.

In these sixty lines a prophetic vision is presented of a race which after ages of sin and sorrow is to be restored to primal innocence and joy. Nor is this a merely political forecast of a Roman empire at peace. Supernatural agencies here produce supernatural results. The new world will indeed have a just government and be without war; but it will also be without the husbandman and the trader, without the corruption of the arts; the earth will feed mankind as the free gift of heaven, and the gods will once more mingle with men. This consummation is the appointed end of a mysterious "process of the suns." From all eternity the world has been under a beneficent divine plan. The happy season, so near at hand, is the fulfilment of everlasting decrees of destiny and Jove. In Virgil's vision, no less than in Isaiah's, is implied a dra-

matic conception of the moral government of the universe. He shared, it is true, the opinion of his age and placed a state of nature and innocence in the remote past. But the forward-looking victorious note is his also. He is ever both scholar and prophet. The restoration of those vanished glories is to be the achievement of divine men, of a divine man, a savior.

No wonder then that the Middle Ages counted him a sacred poet, since his constant mood of pitying expectancy culminates in the conception of a savior of mankind. Christianity was not in error in reverencing his ardent supernaturalism, his trust in a divine order of government evolved through cycles of pre-appointed time, and his exaltation of a Prince of Peace. But his non-Christian elements were of about equal consequence. His millennium is not reared upon ruin. He has no aversion, as the Christian had, to this present world, nor does he reject the beautiful pagan past. The dualism that lay deep in early Christianity he never knew. During ages of monkery his poetry kept alive the love of nature, the sense of joy and beauty. It was this "pagan suckled in a creed outworn" who was both the herald and the enricher of Christianity. Into the very bosom of the Latin Church he brought airs from Greece, so rendering it easier for the men of the Renaissance to treat nature as divine and man as free. Virgil is both the last of the ancients and the first of the moderns.

Pity and hope being thus the saving elements among the thin conventionalities of the *Eclogues*, Virgil retains them in the *Georgics* but transforms them through the addition of sterner stuff. In the *Georgics* toyland has disappeared; the realities of the country claim attention. Nor do we hear anything more of a Utopia, a blessed condition to be dreamed of until some day it appears. Virgil's maturer mind is fixed on the process by which salvation from evil may be secured. It is a process which requires full coöperation between the individual and the State.

The reign of Augustus brought security to city, country, and sea throughout the Roman world. Civil disturbances had ceased, and foreign were only occasional and small. All Italians, as Roman citizens, enjoyed rights and opportunities unknown before. The arts of peace came forward. Commerce and agriculture, domestic comfort, the accumulation of wealth, books both for instruction and enjoyment claimed the place in public attention which until recently had been held by campaigning, civil strife, plunder, and measures for guarding personal safety.

Virgil's patriotism was strong, his intimacy with the ruling powers close. Augustus he honored as the one who had brought about prosperity, and he loved him for the favor shown to his own literary work. To make that work effective in consolidating the State of Augustus became his sacred task. The welfare of Italy he saw must depend in the

long run on its success in agriculture. If the toil of the farmer were scorned and the interests of the population became centered in city life, Italy must remain weak and draw its food supplies from other lands. Virgil, country-born and country-loving, takes it as his special office to dignify the farmer's life. He will bring together the largest knowledge of its methods, making his exposition attractive by beautiful words, melodious sound, stimulating anecdote, exalting myth, and religious suggestion. He will show how widely honored in the past farm life has been, how satisfactory are its rewards, how large its opportunities for quiet enjoyment in home and field. None of its occupations shall be counted unworthy of poetic treatment. Beauty, picturesqueness and the fullest information shall allure the farmer to his handbook. Such, as Williams conceived it, is the patriotic purpose of Virgil in his novel enterprise. That his didactic and aesthetic aims do not always harmonize is plain; and where they conflict, he as a poet is chiefly solicitous for beauty. But the betterment of the State through a knowledge of agriculture is everywhere his formative theme.

Abundant attention, however, is given to the farmer's individual welfare and to the difficulties which attend it. No man can pass through the world without large cause for sadness. The future is always uncertain, life short and liable to sudden overthrow, poverty abounds, men are self-willed, dull, not easily brought to prudence and piety.

The one hope for pitiable mankind lies in labor. The *Georgics* are a continuous chant on the worth of work. Far from being ignored, the hardship of the farmer's life is put forward as a redemptive agency. None so fully as the farmer is trained in incessant watchfulness, swift adaptation to changing conditions, a never-resting judgment, and a recognition that bodily toil is to run through every hour of every day. But work is the friend of man, not his foe; and this the farmer more than others understands. The connection between energy and success is more immediately apparent in his case than elsewhere, and failure more directly traceable to slackness. But slackness being in the blood of us all, Virgil will let no page leave his hand without its insistent appeal to work, work, work! Only when this individual appeal is heeded will the world be beautiful and happy.

The *Georgics* then show a large advance in Virgil's thought. The country is no longer looked upon as a stage for the masquerading of impossible shepherds; it is a training ground for patriotism and moral endeavor. A golden age is indeed at hand, rendered possible by a wise, kind, and powerful prince. But it awaits the call of each one of us. It will not appear until compelled. The blessings of our bounteous earth can be had through no other means than work.

To these remarks on the *Eclogues* and *Georgics* only so much need be added in regard to the *Aeneid* as to indicate how it supplements the two earlier

pieces. In it the individual factor, so strongly insisted on in the *Georgics*, retreats, giving place to profounder if less definable agencies. Throughout the worlds of nature and man run divine purposes, apprehended in every age by elect souls who, faithful to them and regardless of personal desires, lead the unthinking many to lands of promise. Such a divine leader was Aeneas, such Augustus, such in varying degree every man may be in proportion as he possesses wisdom, patience, superiority to passion, and devotion to duty. Whoever is obedient to a heavenly vision preserves not himself alone but a dependent multitude. The importance of leadership, the acceptance of a divine will in place of personal waywardness, with loyalty to constituted authority, are as truly the themes of Virgil's masterpiece as they are of the Book of Exodus.

Virgil's total work, then, has unity. Its three successive pieces show an orderly progress of thought. The distinctive notes are pitying hope, work, and leadership. These different mental attitudes find appropriate expression in poetry of a lyric, didactic and epic character. No doubt in thus detaching his leading ideas from the body of his work I give them undue emphasis. They are in him rather as directing moods of mind than as a formulated creed. And while Virgil is a scholarly and imitative poet, and has copied his predecessors to a degree unknown before or since, yet no poet, unless the equally scholarly Milton, has left a deeper personal impress upon his work. It is

doubtful too whether there is any parallel to the extent of his influence over subsequent poetry in all its three kinds.

In this volume, however, we meet not Virgil alone, but his skilful interpreter. In the preceding pages I have pieced together from fragmentary notes what I suppose Williams wished said as an introduction to his book. But a grateful reader will desire information about the man himself. I cannot be discharged until I have stated the leading facts of his life and sketched, at least in outline, a character which in its full charm was indescribable.

Theodore Chickering Williams was born in Brookline in 1855. His father, Frederic J. Williams, a civil engineer, was a man of more than usual refinement and range of reading. Williams' own interest in good books was much assisted by the influence of W. C. Collar, the stimulating Headmaster of the Roxbury Latin School, where he prepared for College. The elective system was just starting at Harvard when he entered in 1872, and a rather remarkable group of young men availed themselves of the new freedom to develop their taste for English literature. Williams took high rank among them, attaining membership in the Phi Beta Kappa Society and being chosen Orator for Class Day. Largely dependent on his own exertions for education, after taking his Bachelor's

degree in 1876 he taught in the High School at Keene, N. H., for a year, and then turned to that study of divinity which he had long purposed. He graduated from the Harvard Divinity School as the Orator of his Class in 1882, and the same year was ordained over the Unitarian Church in Winchester, Mass. The following year he married Velma Curtis Wright of Boston and, with many regrets on the part of himself and his church, accepted a call to All Souls Church in New York City, becoming at twenty-eight the successor of Henry F. Bellows. During the thirteen years of his ministry here his profound yet simple preaching and the spiritual quality of the entire man took a strong hold on his church and the community. In 1896 his health became so shaken that he resigned and rested in Europe for two years, taking temporary charge of a church in Oakland, California, the year after his return. His scholarship, his interest in education and his influence over young men had always been so marked that when in 1899 it was proposed to found an important fitting-school for boys at Tarrytown on the Hudson, he was asked to take charge. In five years he built Hackley School from its foundations, acquiring land, constructing its beautiful quadrangle, filling it with students, and establishing such traditions of scholarship, manliness and simplicity as have not been surpassed by the oldest schools in the country. Pupils, teachers and parents joined in admiration and affection for him. But

such work cannot be done without friction and fatigue. In 1905 he again laid down his work and took two years of recuperation in Europe. On returning in 1907 he accepted, though with reluctance, the Head-mastership of his old school, the Roxbury Latin. The agreeable work proved too severe, and in 1909 he was obliged to withdraw and for three years to avoid all continuous occupation. When, however, in 1912 a brother minister in Santa Barbara, California, desired to be relieved of work for a year, Williams took his church and so greatly enjoyed the beauty, hospitality, and intelligence of that land of lotus-eaters that he remained through the following summer. Riding one day among the hills he was overcome by the heat and only after an illness of many months was able to return to Boston. When pneumonia attacked him the following winter, it was evident that his physical resources were at an end. He died on May 6, 1915.

He published a volume of sermons, *Character Building* in 1893, an English verse translation of *Tibullus* in 1905, Virgil's *Aeneid* in 1907, and *Poems of Belief* in 1910. He was Preacher to Harvard University, 1888-90, and poet of the Harvard Phi Beta Kappa Society in June, 1904. In 1911 he received the degree of Litt.D., from Western Reserve University. Some twenty of his hymns are scattered in the hymnals of this country and England.

He was of middle height, slight in figure, light-

haired, with mobile, subtle features which imparted to his face an expression like that of Emerson or of Cardinal Newman. His unusual powers of intellectual and moral leadership were early recognized. In a not long and necessarily fragmentary life he accomplished, by aid of a happy home, three remarkable pieces of work. While turning from boyhood to manhood he met the complex demands of a large city church. In middle life there followed the extraordinary success in building, organizing, and inspiring a great school, meeting in it a class of problems with which he had no previous experience. Then in the leisure of advancing age he turns to his life-long companion, Virgil, and through narrative ease, noble diction, and modulated sound, makes him companionable for us too. In all these diverse undertakings the same traits come out. Williams was everywhere thinker, poet, and saint.

His mind played about every subject it touched. The many aspects which truth might assume, its shades, its contradictions even, delighted him. He would suddenly question one of his deepest beliefs and had small regard for formal consistency. Intellectual stagnation was abhorrent to him and impossible for any one in his company. Both thought and utterance were perpetually fresh and highly individual. Yet the texture of his mind was firm and its idealistic convictions seemed strengthened by continual criticism. The casual stranger quickly felt that keen, original, and

scholarly intellect which allowed itself no lazy ambiguities and was ever eager to receive greater reasonableness from others.

This open-mindedness, intellectual refinement, and disposition to create his own modes of speech made poetry, and indeed Fine Art of all sorts, a constant ingredient of his daily life. It never became an artificial pastime. He looked out upon a glad world with the unwearied eyes of a child, seized its human values with rejoicing, sensitively harmonized its discords, and swiftly created appropriate forms for depicting its incidents. He found some good side in everyone, in every experience, remarking in the midst of his last pneumonia that he had never enjoyed an illness so much. His letters were consequently delightful. In his Victorian youth literary interests were dominant, over-topping those of science and commerce. Curiously blended they were too with moral passion. Carlyle, Emerson, Mill, Huxley, Ruskin, were no less great rhetoricians than reformers. The same combination was in Williams. Sound, beautiful, and persuasive language was with him a part of morality, almost of religion, and by daily discipline it had been fashioned into an instinct. While nothing could induce him to his desk if he were not in the mood, at the right moment he would turn off a hymn or Latin epigram while dressing as naturally as a business man plans a commercial deal. Though there was thus in him much of the improvisatore, he loved to polish too, and allowed

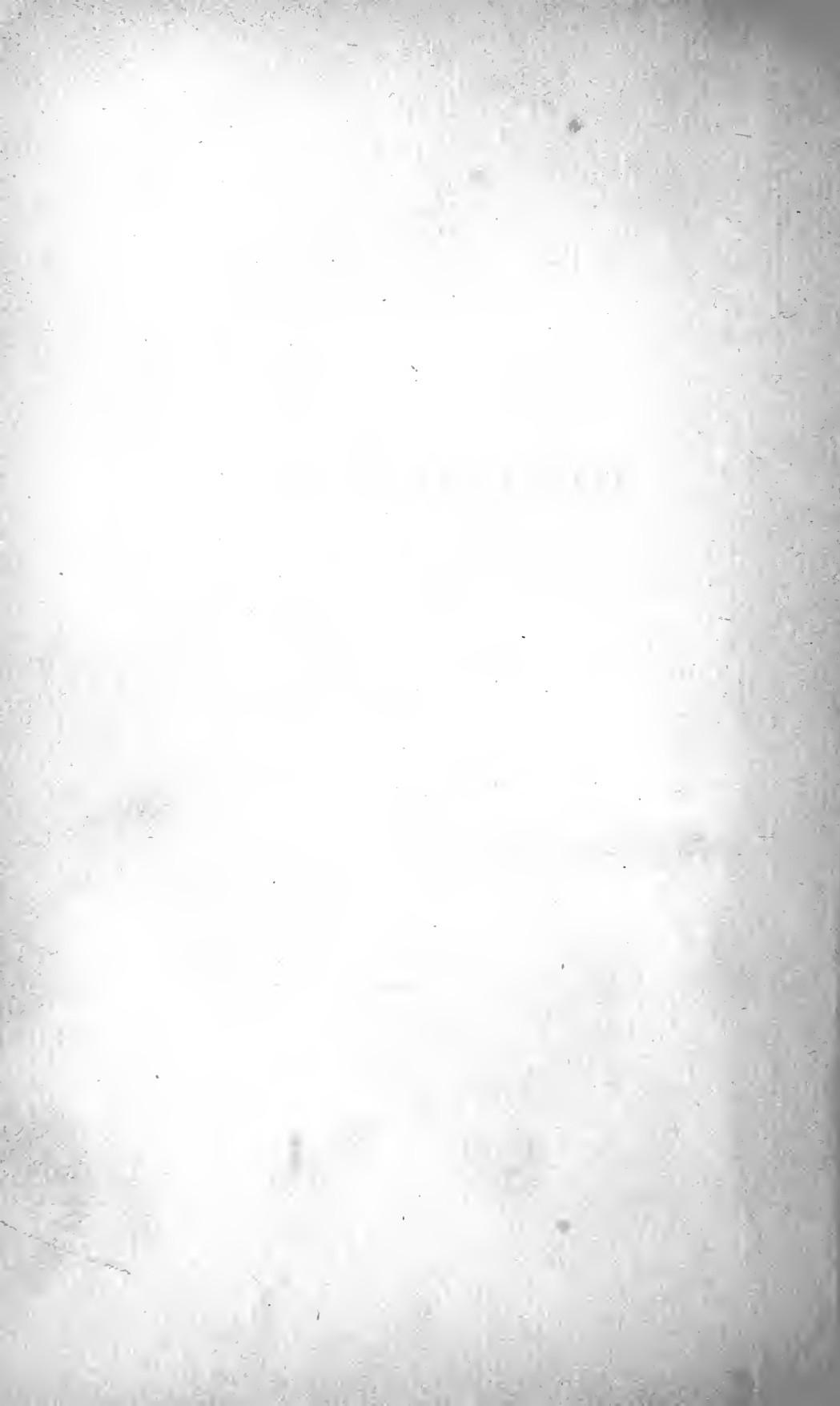
nothing to leave his hand till it had reached its utmost perfection. Like all poets, he lived deeply in the present moment; and when it passed, concerned himself little with it and its works. He therefore bore about no burden of regrets, resentments, or fixed limitations, although sometimes depressed with a low estimate of his powers.

All who met him felt his unselfish character and were fascinated by its blending of virility and loveliness. Religion went all through him. He might be said to live with the Eternal and to be ever engaged in tracking its presence through temporal things. While a convinced Unitarian, of a conservative type, he was never misled by "Liberalism" into contempt of other Christians, but felt a humble sympathy with all devout souls. One might well apply to him the abused term "spiritually-minded," only one should then remember his organizing skill, his shrewd judgment of men, and his practical attention to whatever agencies fight poverty, ignorance, and vice. Few so spiritual are also so full of humor, so continually playful. But being thoroughly at home in his Father's house, he found it natural to play there. Whether teaching school, building a church, interpreting Virgil, or sitting as the scintillating center of a group of talkers, he was ever the Christian gentleman, dignified yet charming, and like Pope's "gracious Chandos" was "beloved at sight."

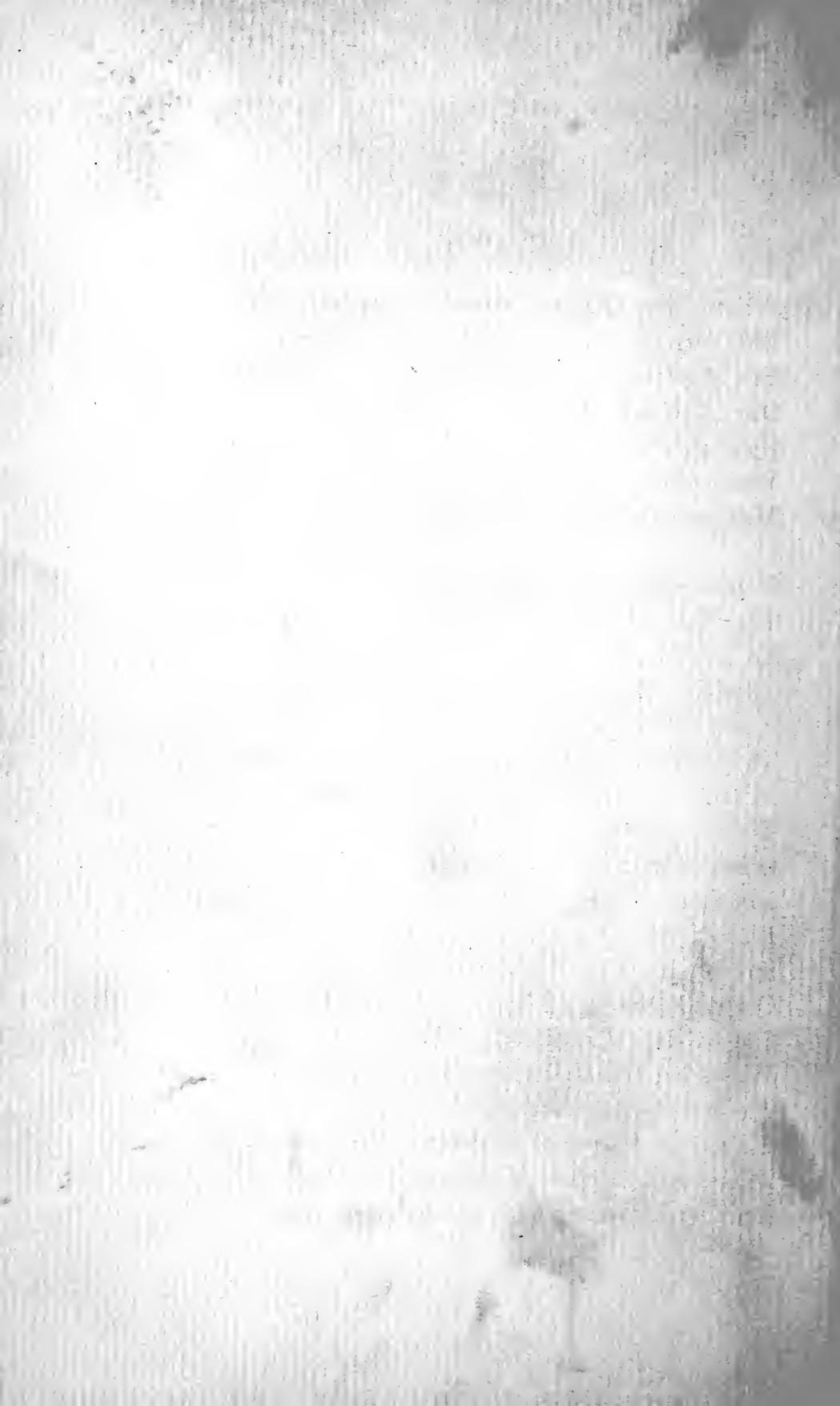
G. H. PALMER.

CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS,

September 1, 1915.



THE GEORGICS



GEORGIC I

What brings glad harvest-days, what starry sign
Bids turn the sod for seeding, when to wed
The elm tree and the vine, what watchful care
Our cattle ask, the various art and skill
Good shepherds use, the sage experience
Which thrifty bees require, — such lowly themes,
Maecenas, let me here attempt in song.

O universal lights, supremely fair,
That through the welkin guide the circling year,
Ye first I call. Then your celestial grace,
Bacchus and blessed Ceres, by whose gifts
Earth changed Chaonia's scanty acorn-crop
To full-eared, golden corn, and new-trod grape
Mixed red with Achelous' storied stream.
Then, helpers kind to husbandmen, ye Fauns, —
O Fauns with lovely Dryads tripping free! —
Your works I sing. Thee, too, for whom the Earth
Flung forth, long ages gone, the prancing horse,
Smitten by thy tall trident's potent blow,
O Father Neptune! Then that forester
Sad Aristaeus, lord of Ceos' isle,
Whose herd, three hundred snow-white bulls, are fed
Along its bosky terraces. Then, thou,
O Pan, the keeper of all flocks! With not less love
Than for thy sacred Maenalus, dwell here,
Leaving Lycaean glades and native groves,

To bless thine altars here, Arcadian God.
Minerva, too, who bade the olive bloom,
And that boy-deity who first contrived
The cleaving plough; and Sylvan, carrying
Th' uprooted, sapling cypress for a sign;
All gods and goddesses who o'er broad lands
Hold guard and governance, who give increase
To strange, wild fruits unsown of mortal hand,
Or on Man's planting drop the bounteous rain.

Last, though in heavenly conclave what due seat
Shall be hereafter thine is yet unknown,
Caesar, on thee I call. Will't guardian be
Of cities and assume celestial care
Of every land, while thee the world receives
For harvest patron and the lord of storms,
Thy mother's myrtle wreathed about thy brow ?
Or wilt thou rise upon us as the god
Of the unmeasured sea, while mariners
To thee alone make vows, while the world's end
To thee bows down, and dowered with all her waves
Tethys, the sea-queen bids thee wed her child ?
Or wilt thou be a newly stationed sign
Among the summer stars, in vacant space
Betwixt the Virgin and the threatening Claws,
Where, look ! the flaming Scorpion for thee
Already shrinks his grasp, abandoning
His more than equal portion of the sky ?
Where'er thou reignest (for it may not be
That gloomy Tartarus could claim thee king,
Nor that thine own heart the dread hope should hold

Of such a throne, though Greece with rapture sang
Elysium's happy fields, and Proserpine
Heeds not her mother's bidding to return).
Oh grant me a good voyage! To my bold task
Nod thy assenting brow, and even as I,
Pity the farmer-folk, oft at a loss
What way to choose. Begin thy power divine,
And wont thee now to heed our vows and prayers.

In earliest Spring when from the mountains white
The frozen rains dissolve, and zephyr's breath
Loosens the yielding clod from frosty chain,
Then and no later, let thy plough drive deep,
Thy oxen groan, and burnished by its toil,
Thy gleaming ploughshare from the furrow shine.
Yet will the careful master's crops reward,
Though late, his prayers, if fallow lie the land
Two radiant summers and two winters cold:—
His barns burst with his endless tale of sheaves.
But ere our ploughs upturn a field unknown,
Care must be taken to observe the winds
And changing skies, what modes and habits be
The region's heritage, what gift each place
Bears or denies. These acres favor corn,
In yonder, vines grow better; elsewhere spring
Fruit-orchards and a wealth of unsown green.
Who knows not how the scented saffron grows
On Tmolus, Lydian hill ? that ivory
Is India's trade, and frankincense the pride
Of sensual Araby ? The Chalybes
Delve naked after iron, Pontus breeds

The Castor drug, and far Epirus sends
Her mettled coursers for Olympian palms.
Such are the laws, the lasting covenants,
Which Nature's power ordains for place and time,
Since first Deucalion that primal morn
Flung stones behind him o'er th' unpeopled world
Whence men upsprang, — a tribe as hard as stone.
Therefore, to work! The first months of the year
Must bid thy strong bulls turn the fruitful ground.
Let dusty summer with maturing ray
Bake the flat clod; but if the chosen field
Be somewhat sterile, it serves well to plough
Light furrows in the month Arcturus comes,
Lest, in one case, weeds crowd the healthy corn,
Or, next, all moisture leave the barren sand.

In odd years, also, let the close-grazed fields
Lie fallow, while the resting land crusts o'er
Neglected; or beneath some later star
Sow golden corn, where once the humble crops
Were pulse, with shaking, bursting pods, and growth
Of tiny-seeded vetches, or frail stems
And whistling patch of lupine, bitter weed!
For flax will burn the land, so too will oats,
And poppies with Lethean sleep imbued
Are crops that burn the heart of any soil.
The change of crop makes light work. But fear not
To soak the land with good, rich dung, or strew
Waste ashes where the wide fields lie outworn.
Thus with changed harvest give your lands repose,
For earth unploughed has many a gift in store.

'Tis oft great gain to set bad lands on fire
And burn the stubble in sharp crackling flame.
Haply the earth some secret powers conceives
And seeds of nourishment; or some disease
Is burned out and all noisome dews expelled;
Or heat, more like, the hidden breathing-holes
And secret channels opens and sets free,
Whereby the young plants drink the moisture in.
More often heat gives toughness and contracts
The soil's large veins, lest soaking showers bring harm,
Or the swift sun's too fierce extreme of power,
Or wintry blasts of Boreas' piercing cold.
He also who shall break the sluggish clods
With rakes, and drag the osier hurdles o'er,
Prosperers his tillage well, and not in vain
Him golden Ceres from Olympus views.
Nor him who o'er the once-ploughed land upturns
Again his ridges, and with oblique share
Cuts cross-wise; for he trains his land to toil,
And is true captain of obedient fields.

For summers moist and windless winters fair
Pray heaven, ye farmer-folk. In winters dry
The corn rejoices and your acres smile.
'Tis of this blessing Mysia chiefly boasts,
Where Gargara wonders at the wealth she bears.
Why tell of him who when his seed is strewn
Attacks his field forthwith and smooths away
The mounds of sterile sand? Soon o'er his crops
He guides a flood of hastening rivulets;
For when his acres burn and green things die,

Look! from the forehead of the channelled hill
He lures the waters down. The tumbling streams
Wake a hoarse murmur on the polished stones
And pouring free, relieve the thirsty land.
Another husbandman, lest wheat-stalks bend
Beneath the teeming ear, turns in his flock
To shear the green, too rankly springing, blades
When first the young shoots top the furrow's side.
Another from some saturated bog
Drains off the gathered waters, chiefly when
The river, after months of changeful sky,
Swells o'er its banks, filling wide flats with slime,
And from the swamp-holes steams the heated ooze.

Yet though the toils of men and oxen turn
A careful furrow through the glebe, not less
Will bold wild-geese, or Strymon's host of cranes,
Or bitter-fibred weeds their mischief do,
Or overgrowth of shade spoil half the corn.

Great Jove himself ordained for husbandry
No easy road, when first he bade earth's fields
Produce by art, and gave unto man's mind
Its whetting by hard care; where Jove is king
He suffers not encumbering sloth to bide.
Before Jove reigned no busy husbandmen
Subdued the ground; there was no usage then
Of landmarks, lines and severance of the fields;
All goods were common, and the liberal earth
Gave every gift unsued. 'Twas Jove bestowed
Foul poison on dread serpents, bade the wolves
Be robbers, vexed with troubling waves the sea,

Shook off from leafy oaks their honey-dew,
Concealed the seeds of fire, and stopped the flow
Of streaming rills that once ran red with wine.
He purposed that experience and thought
By slow degrees should fashion and forge out
Arts manifold, should seek green blades of corn
By ploughing, and from veins of flinty shard
Hammer the fire. Then first the rivers felt
Skiffs made of hollowed alder. Mariners
Then told the names and numbers of the stars:
Hyades, Pleiads, and Lycaon's child,
The glorious Bear. Then first were forests laid
With snares for woodland creatures: cunningly
Men limed the birds, or circled glade and scaur
With barking pack, or lashed the rivers wide
With cast of net, or trailed the briny sea
With dripping lines. Then iron in hot forge
Took temper and the chill-edged saw was made;
For driven wedges first were used to cleave
The yielding grain of wood. Then later times
Brought forth of other arts the varied skill.
Work conquered all, relentless, obstinate,
While poverty and hardship urged it on.
Ceres of old taught mortal men to delve
The earth with iron share, what evil time
The hallowed groves their acorns and wild fruits
Refused to bear, and from Dodona's tree
No nurture fell. But soon the growing corn
Required fresh labor when a mildew foul
Devoured the stalks, and prickly was the field
With idle thistles; the good crops were lost

And in their place sprang thorny undergrowth
Of burrs and caltrops; over beauteous fields
The witch-grass and vile darnel won the day.
Wherefore unless with frequent harrowings
Thou dost compel thy land, and with loud cries
Scarest the crows away, and prunest close
All over-darkening branches, and with prayer
Dost win full rains from heaven, — then, alas!
Thou shalt in vain behold the bursting barns
Some neighbor hath, and stay thine appetite
On forest acorn shaken from the tree.

Now shall be told what weapons in their war
The sturdy farmers use, without whose aid
No sowing time or reaping e'er could be,
No crop could e'er be sown or harvest rise.
The ploughshare first with heavy-timbered strength
Of curving handles, then the harvest wains,
Their slow wheels sacred to Eleusis' queen;
The threshing-sledges, drags, and clumsy weight
Of harrows; osier-plaited basketry
By worshipt Celeus given; the hurdles wound
With sacred stems; and blest Iacchus' sign,
The mystic winnowing-fan. These, one and all
With forward-looking mind for months before
Provide, if worthy thou would'st always be.
To claim the glory of the art divine
Of husbandry. The elm tree in the grove
While yet a sapling small must be constrained
By pressure strong to take the curving line
Of the plough's handle; joined to this the pole

Stretches eight feet in front; there is the pair
Of earth-boards, and the share-beam fitted well
With double-timbered back. Cut for the yoke
A linden light, and from a beech tree tall
Wood for the staff which at the base controls
The turning of the plough. Long time each piece
Should hang in hearth-smoke for good seasoning.

Many the wise old maxims I could tell,
If patient thou would'st hear, not wearying
Of sage acquaintance with small tasks and cares.
This notably, to smooth the threshing-floor
Break it by hand and roll with large round stone,
Then face with close-packed clay, lest weeds push through
Or the worn surface crack; wherewith arrives
Many a pest to plague thee: such as he
Of subterranean house and granary,
The small mouse; or, though prisoned by his eyes,
The mole digs deep his bed; or lurking toad
Peers from his hole; and many a prodigy
The earth unnumbered breeds: the weevil tribes
Whose legions ravage the high heap of corn,
And ants, whose fear is age and poverty.

Observe well if the walnut in the grove
Blossom in mantling flowers and downward bend
Its fragrant boughs; for if its fruit abound,
A like corn-crop will follow and a year
Of generous heat and threshing; but if groves
Spread forth mere luxury of leafy shade,
Then wilt thou thresh in vain the chaff-blown straw.

Many I know who ere the beans are sown
Steep them in nitre and mix lees of oil,
That in the pods, so oft of promise vain,
A larger size be found. ✓ Yet have I seen
Seeds chosen patiently and tested long
And moistened, too, over a gentle fire,
Spoilt notwithstanding, save if year by year
One picked the best by hand. It is the law
Of all things to grow worse and to return
To lower levels; as when oarsmen drive
A boat upstream, if once the rowing slack,
The hurrying river hurls it headlong down.
Besides, we must of stars as watchful be —
Arcturus, the bright Serpent, the two Kids, —
As men bound homeward over stormful seas
Who venture Hellespont and threatening straits
Where rich Abydos its famed oyster bears.
When Libra to the hours of sleep and day
Gives equal measure and divides the globe
Betwixt the realms of darkness and of light,
Then, ploughmen, drive your oxen hard and seed
The fields with barley, until comes the verge
Of stormy winter, little apt for toil.

Also the flax and Ceres' garland flowers,
The poppies, should be sown; and now begin
With constant harrowing, while the unsoaked soil
Allows, and yet the rainclouds brood afar.
In Spring, bean-sowing! and let furrows moist
Receive the Medic clover; every Spring
Prepare the millet, when with golden horns

The white Bull opes the year, and in retreat
The Dog, with star averted, sinks obscure.
But if for bearded wheat or sturdy spelt
Thy land is tilled and only grain is planned,
Let first the morning Pleiads cease to shine
And the fierce splendor of the Cretan Crown,
Ere in the furrows thou shalt cast their due
Of seeds, and ere to a reluctant soil
Thou rashly lend the hopes of all the year.
Many before the Pleiad sets begin,
But them their long-awaited harvest cheats
With withered corn. If vetches thou wouldest have
Or common kidney bean, and scornest not
Lentils, th' Egyptian sort, the sinking Bear
Will show no doubtful sign; then start away
And to mid-winter frosts the work prolong.
To give this guidance doth the golden Sun
Govern the heavenly sphere, which sectioned is
In changeless regions by twelve starry Signs.
Five zones possess the sky: one dazzling bright
Glows ever in the sun and burns with fire;
Round this to right and leftward lie outspread
Two zones extreme, with blue ice mantled o'er
And clouds of gloom. Midway between them lie
The two which by the grace of gods belong
To suffering mortals. Through them both a path
Cuts slantwise, for the highway of the Signs.
Toward Scythia and the hoar Riphæan peaks
The sphere is lifted high; toward Libya
Low to the south it bends. The upper pole
Is ever high above us; the obverse

Is deeper than dark Styx and shades below.
Around the North the monster Serpent trails
With coil and curve, and like a river winds
'Twixt the two Bears — the stars that shrink away
And shun the watery touch of Ocean's rim.
At South, a timeless, voiceless night, some say,
Far spreads in gathered gloom; or truth may be
Aurora from our realm retires to bring
Their Morn; and when her panting chariot-steeds
Breathe here, then Vesper's torch lights there the stars.

'Tis with such knowledge that we can foretell
From shifting skies the storms to come, and times
For reaping or for seed, what day to stir
With stroke of oars the smooth, perfidious sea,
When fleets should launch them forth in war-array,
When in the forests to lay low the pine.
It is no idle watch to mark the Signs
That set or rise, and how th' impartial year
In four distinguished, equal seasons flows.
When a skilled farmer by long winter rains
Is bound indoors, he finds occasion fair
For tasks at leisure, which some later day
Would bid him slight in haste, if skies were clear.
The ploughman hammers keen the point
Of the worn share, he scoops out trees for troughs,
Or brands his herd, or on full sacks of corn
Smears numbers; others whittle out sharp stakes,
Or forked props, or for the rambling vines
Twine withes of willow; others plait by hand
Light baskets of the stems of hillside thorn;

Now parch the corn on embers and then grind
Upon a well-smoothed stone. For even on days
Of hallowed festival it is no wrong
Some fitting task to ply. No law divine
Hinders to trench and drain, or hedge about
A ripening harvest, or set snares for birds,
Or burn out brambles, or in healthful stream
To bathe the bleating flock; 'tis on such days
The driver loads his slow-paced donkey's ribs
With oil and low-priced apples, then plods home
Fetching from city forum a cut stone
Or large black lump of pitch.

The moon herself
Ordains the days which for their fitting tasks
Are omened well. The fifth day bodes great ill:
For death-pale Orcus and the Eumenides
On this were born, and Earth's prodigious womb
With throes accurst brought forth Iapetus,
Coeus and grim Typhoeus, the fell brood
Who plotted to tear down the sky, and thrice
Strove to plant Ossa upon Pelion's crown,
And on them forest-clad Olympus fling,
But thrice Jove's bolt the heaped-up hills o'erthrew.
The seventeenth brings luck in planting vines,
Roping and training bulls, and starting webs
Upon the loom; the ninth gives good escapes
And thwarts the thief.

Yet night's chill hours are best
For many a task, or when with orient beam
The morn bedews the pastures. Then men crop
Light stubble, and at night mow fields burnt dry:

For soft night-moisture then but seldom fails.
Some watch late hours by blazing winter hearth
And with keen blade point torches, while the wife,
Consoling her long toil with cheerful song,
Through loom and web her shrill-voiced shuttle moves,
Or boils sweet must above a roaring fire,
And skims with leaves the cauldron's bubbling tide.

But 'tis the full midsummer when ripe corn
Is ready for the sickle; at hot noon
Bruise on the threshing-floor the arid grain.
Plough naked and sow naked. Winter days
Should bring the farmer ease; the country folk
When the cold strengthens use their garnered store
In welcome feasts and hospitable cheer,
While merry winter spreads the board and breaks
The bonds of care; as when full-laden ships
Come to safe port at last, and on their prows
The happy mariners wind wreaths of flowers.
Yet now is time to pluck from oaken bough
Its acorns, and the laurel's bitter fruit,
With bay and, red as blood, the myrtle berries.
Now snare the crane, lay nets for antlered stags,
Chase long-eared hares. Now may Balearic archers
Strike the shy does, whirling their sling in air
By its hemp cord, while now the snow lies deep
And streams compact their ice.

What now to tell
Of autumn's tempests and her starry signs?
When now the days grow short and suns more mild,
What anxious watch men keep! Or when the Spring

Departs with showery skies, and in the fields
The pointed blades flaunt forth, and budding corn
Thrusters itself full-sapped from the fresh, green stem!
Oft have I seen (just when the husbandman
Was sending to the yellow harvest fields
His band of reapers, binding the frail stalks
In sheaves) a war of winds rush down and smite
The full corn far and wide, and from the roots
Uptearing, toss it high, as wintry storms
Dark whirling, sweep up stubble and light straw.
Oft out of heaven a boundless multitude
Of waters bursts, and gathering from the sea
The clouds roll up black rains and tempests dire.
Down crashes the whole sky, and floods of rain
Drown the fair fields and all the oxen's toil.
The trenches overflow, the channelled streams
Swell with a roar, and all the sea is stirred
With waves untamable. Then Jupiter
From midnight dark of thunder-cloud throws forth
With his own hand his blinding bolt divine.
The vast earth shudders at the shock, the beasts
Are fled to cover, and in haunts of men
Great cowering fear all mortal hearts confounds.
The god could thus with blazing shaft o'erwhelm
Athos and Rhodope, and hurl to dust
The proud Ceraunian peaks. With doubling roar
The tempest blows and heavier pours the rain,
While with wild blasts the woods and shores make moan.

In fear of such, watch how the starry skies
Change with the monthly signs; what winding course

Saturn's cold planet takes, and 'mid what spheres
Strays Mercury's red fire. But chiefly pay
Fit worship to the gods. Make sacrifice
Each year to sovereign Ceres, when the grass
Is green and glad, the winter making end
And gentle Spring is in the air, when lambs
Are fattening, when the wine grows smooth and mild,
And sweet is slumber in cool hillside shade.
Let all the country youth of manly prime
On Ceres call, bearing her tribute due
Of honey mixed with milk and sweet, new wine.
Three times around the freshly bladed corn
The blessed victim guide, while all the choir
In gladsome company an anthem sing,
Bidding the goddess to their lowly doors.
And let no reaper touch the ripened corn
With sickle keen until his brows he bind
With twine of oak-leaf, while he trips along
In artless dance with songs in Ceres' praise.

¶ 'Twas Jove's own grace decreed that by sure signs
Men prophesy of droughts, rains, frost and winds,
Watching the admonitions of the moon,
Marking what bodes a gale, what oft-seen signs
Bid herdsmen keep their cattle nigh the barn.
When storms are rising, the wide ocean's flood
Begins to toss and roll; on wooded hills
Tumultuous crash is heard; from every side
The mountain lakes re-echo; vaster swells
The forest's moaning; now the smiting seas
Scarce spare the ship's round side; the sea-gulls wing

From mid-sea swiftly home and fill the shore
With clamorous voice; while safe upon the beach
The brown coots play; the heron makes escape
From green salt fens, her haunt, and cloudward soars,
Oft when a tempest threatens, you shall see
The very stars drop headlong from the sky
And trail through night's deep gloom a glittering flame.
Oft through the air flit straws and fallen leaves,
And floating feathers dance along the stream.
But when the wild North region flashes, while
Both East and West are thundering, soon the land
Is flooded with full streams, and out at sea
Wise mariners haul close the dripping sail.

Never unheralded descends the storm;
For while 'tis brewing, cranes of lofty wing
Retreat to lowland vales; the heifer scans
The sky above and snuffs the passing breeze
With nostrils wide; the swallow with shrill cry
Flits round the pond, and from the marshy ooze
The frogs in choir their age-long trouble sing;
Often the ant from out her secret cells
Bores her strait path and brings her eggs to air;
A spacious rainbow drinks the rain; the crows
Their camp abandon and in martial line
Depart, with clashing of unnumbered wings;
Sea-birds of many a tribe, that haunt the fens
Of Asia and Caÿster's waters fair,
Eagerly splash their backs with showers of spray,
Dive head down in the stream, and race along
The rippling surface, while unrestingly

They plunge with fury in the needless bath.
With lifted voice the loud insulting crow
Invokes the rain, and o'er some sandy marge
Circles alone. Then if the maidens ply
Their looms at night, they know the tempest nigh,
As in the lamp's clay bowl the burning oil
Flickers and all the wick is wet with mould.

Likewise by tokens sure thou mayst foretell
Clear sunshine after rain and days of calm:
For the stars seem with undimmed ray to shine,
And the bright moon as if she need not steal
Her brother's beam, nor longer through the skies
Drifts the light gossamer of fleecy clouds;
Nor does the halcyon sunward spread her wings
Along the sea-marge, bird to Thetis dear;
Nor do the filthy swine their sheaves of straw
Bite, but they toss them fiercely round the pen.
The misty clouds creep downward to the vales
And linger on the meadows; the night-owl
Watching from house-tops how the sun goes down
Now sings in vain her ominous even-song;
Aloft in cloudless air the osprey soars, —
Nisus he was, and Scylla feels her doom
For faithless theft of that one purple hair;
And where her wings escaping cleave the blue,
Lo, with a mighty whirr of wings her foe
Nisus, air-borne, pursues; where Nisus rides
Upon the wind, there too must Scylla fly
And cleave with panic wing the vacant blue.
Then with clear note and eager-throated voice

The crows three times and four repeat their cry,
And often in their airy dwellings feel
A strange new stir of joy, and hid in leaves
Make clamorous talk; they love when storms are done
To tend the small broods and dear nests once more.
It is not, as I think, some inborn power
Made theirs by gift divine, nor foresight true
By natural law bestowed; but when the shift
Of weather comes, and all the flowing skies
Their courses alter, and the laden air
Drenched with the southwinds turns from thick to thin
And thin to thick, — then all the creatures' minds
New images receive and in their breasts
Are other thoughts than when the storm-winds blew.
So in the fields the birds consenting sing,
The flocks are glad, the crows in triumph cry.

If wisely you shall watch the swift-wheeled sun
And moon in ordered change, no morrow morn
Will disappoint, nor eve of flattering calm
Betray and snare. When the first crescent moon,
Now reassembling her resurgent fires,
Clasps a dark mist betwixt her shadowed horns,
Then for the farmer-folk and out at sea
Vast storm is brewing; but if maiden blush
O'erspread her face, then wind; the golden moon
Glowes red in wind; but if — the surest sign —
She shines clear the fourth night and travels heaven
With undiminished horns, then all that day,
And all succeeding till the month is done,
Will bring nor rain nor wind: and safe on shore

The sailors sing with Panopaea's praise
Glaucus and Melicertes, Ino's child.

Also the sun both with his rising beams
And when in western wave his front he hides,
Gives many a token. Signs infallible
Attend the sun. He shows them in the skies
At morn and when the rising stars appear.
When his dim dawn a spotted mantle wears
And he, cloud-wrapt, the half his orb withdraws,
Then look for showers: for then the southern storm,
Of forest, flock, and field the wrathful foe,
Is speeding from the deep. Or when at dawn
Sparse beams pierce heavy clouds, and pale of brow
Aurora from Tithonus' saffron bed
Shall take her flight, — ah, then the tendrilled vine
For mellowing grapes will sorry shelter prove,
While rattling thick upon the roof down pours
The dancing hail. But also when the sun
Is setting and his heavenly course is spanned,
Then more than ever mark his aspect well.
For oft we see strange shifts of color stray
Along his face: the azure heralds rain,
Flame-hued, strong wind. But if red flashes glow
With mingling spots, then will you soon behold
A heaven-wide tumult of dark clouds and storms.
On such a night let none my ship compel
On the deep seas to ride, nor from safe shore
Her cable sever. But if his orb shall shine
Undimmed, both when he gives the glorious day
Or his own gift beneath the world conceals,

Then vain your fear of storms, and you shall see
Your waving woods by cloudless north-winds move.
Lastly, what morn the closing eve portends,
What winds bring rainless clouds, what coming harm
The misty southwind means, of these and more
The sun will show the signs.

What mortal dares

Doubt the sun's speaking true ? Is it not he
That warns full oft when dark seditions lour,
Treasons and swelling tides of secret war ?
He pitied Rome when Caesar fell, and long
In clouds of iron gloom his forehead veiled,
Till this bad age feared night could have no end.
Yea, in those times the earth, the spreading seas,
Abominable dogs and birds accursed,
Gave portents terrible. Day after day
From bursting furnace-caverns Aetna poured
Vast, seething floods along the Cyclops' land,
With balls of flame and rocks in molten flow.
A clash of arms that filled the arching skies
Germania heard. The Alpine summits shook
With shuddering strange. Through silent groves divine
A mighty cry smote many a listening ear,
And phantoms wondrous pale were seen to move
Along the shades of night. The lowing herds
Spoke language—fearful sign ! The flowing streams
Stood still, earth opened, and in temple shrines
The bronze and ivory shed sorrow's tears,
Eridanus, the king of streams, engulfed
Whole groves in raging waves, and through wide vales
Bore flock and fold away. In those dark days

The victim's entrails never ceased to show
Some evil-boding sign. The very wells
Ran blood; the cities all night long
Were loud with howling wolves; never till then
So many thunderbolts from cloudless skies,
So many frightful comets flamed afar.

Because of these Philippi viewed once more,
Each against each, in clash of equal arms,
The ranks of Romans ride; nor did high heaven
Forbid that twice the blood of Romans spilled
Enriched the pastures of Emathia

And all wide plains from Haemus' top o'erviewed.
The day shall come, I ween, when in that land
Some farmer, driving deep his curving share,
Shall find rust-eaten javelins half-consumed,
Or with his heavy harrow smite upon
Helmets, all empty, and with wonder scan
Gigantic bones in opened grave laid bare.

Gods of our fathers, and protecting powers
That watch our native land, O Romulus,
O Vesta, sacred mother, who dost guard
Our Tuscan Tiber and Rome's Palatine,
Fail not to grant that our young Prince restore
The ruined world. Too long our blood is poured
To wash away the sinful perjury
Of King Laomedon. Already Heaven,
Th' Olympian dwelling, envies us for thee,
O Caesar, and complains thou still dost choose
Triumphs on earth; for here both right and wrong
Lie mingled and o'erthrown. So many wars
Vex the whole world, so many monstrous shapes

Of wickedness appear; no honor due
Is given the sacred plough; our fields and farms,
Their masters taken, rankly lie untilled;
Our pruning-hooks are beaten in hot flames
To tempered swords. Euphrates yonder stirs,
There wild Germania, to impious war;
Close-neighbored cities their firm leagues forswear
And rush to arms. The War-god pitiless
Moves wrathful through the world. With not less rage
Swift chariot-horses through the circus bound
With ever-quickenning pace; the driver pale
Is vanquished by his team and waves on high
His helpless reins; no curb the chariot heeds.

GEORGIC II

The arts of husbandry, the stars of heaven,
Thus far have filled my song; but, Bacchus, now
Of thee I sing, of many a greenwood tree,
And of the slow-grown olive's offspring fair.
Draw nigh, O Sire Lenaeus! thy good gifts
On every side abound; the teeming land
Blooms with autumnal vines, the foaming vats
Run o'er with vintage. O Lenaeus, come,
Here at our wine-press cast thy buskins by,
And stain with purple grape thine ankles bare.

Mark at the outset in what differing wise
Trees left to Nature propagate their kind.
For some, not urged of man, spread far and wide
At their own will, along the open plains
Or winding rivers; thus the osiers grow,
The pliant broom-plant, the tall poplar's stem,
And smooth green willows silvering in the wind.
But others from sown seed begin; as groves
Of lofty chestnut, and Jove's chosen leaf,
Sweet acorn, or that oak, whose vocal bough
Seemed to the listening Greeks an oracle.
Others of scions densely clustering grow,
As cherry and elm; Parnassian laurel, too,
Lifts in large mother-shade its infant stem.
These three are Nature's ways; such bourgeoning

The shrubs, the copses have, and templed groves.
But art and custom other means contrive:
One cuts his slips from out the yielding womb
Of mother tree, and in his trenches sets;
One buries stocks in earth, as quartered stakes
Or pointed poles; some trees need slips bent back
Bow-shaped, which take root in their native soil;
Some need no root at all; the pruner's blade
Cuts the tree's crest and plants it in the ground.
Even small sections serve, and, strange to tell!
Out of bare blocks will burst the olive green.
Often we watch one tree put forth unharmed
Branches of differing kind: a pear-tree grows
Engrafted apples, and tough cornels wild
Redden with plums.

Therefore, O husbandmen,
Be diligent to learn the culture due
Each separate kind, and soften by your skill
The wilding fruit's harsh, native quality.
No land need idle be. Steep Ismara
Blooms well with Bacchus' gift, and olives fair
Mantle Taburnus' mighty sides with green.

But bless me, thou, and course with me this voyage,
My glory, my Maecenas, thou chief part
Of all my fame, spread sail on this wide sea!
Yet shall my song not all its world explore,
Nor could it if a hundred tongues were mine,
A hundred mouths and voice of iron. Grant
Thy favor for a voyage by neighboring shores,
Ever in reach of land. Nor will I here

Detain thine ear with false laborious song
Through twisted preludes winding without end.

Wild trees that of their native vigor rise
Into the realms of day, are scant of fruit
But sound and strong, — the soil such virtue hides.
Yet if engrafted or in trenches set,
Are changed and put their sylvan nature by,
Till to what modes and forms your busy art
Persuades them, they with slight resistance yield.
Even the leafless stems which the tree's roots
Put forth do likewise, if in open field
Replanted; for the branching foliage
Of mother-tree o'ershades and blights the fruit
Before it buds, or withers it when blown.
Trees grown from seed have slow maturity
And unto children's children give their shade.
Their fruit is tasteless and degenerate;
The wild vine's grape to robber birds is given.
For all, I ween, must labors hard and slow
Be measured out; all must in trench and row
Be disciplined and at large cost subdued.
The olive-trees from leafless truncheons spring,
Vines out of layers, and from solid wood
The Paphian myrtle. Hardy hazels start
From suckers; this way too the mighty ash,
And poplar, leafy crown of Hercules,
And acorns of Chaonian Jove; thus too
The soaring palm is born, and mountain fir,
Erewhile to tempt the hazards of the sea.
But when engrafted, the tough arbute springs

From walnut stock, the barren plane-tree bears
Excellent apples, chestnuts change to beech,
The mountain ash turns white with blossoming pear,
And swine crunch acorns under elm-tree shade.

Nor is there one sole way to graft and bud:
For where young eyes from the tree's bark swell forth,
Bursting their tender sheaths, a slit is made
Just at the knot; and here they fasten in
The shoot from stranger tree, and bid it thrive
In the moist sapwood. Or smooth trunks are gashed,
And wedges through the solid timber driven,
Then fruit-tree scions set: in no long time
The tall tree skyward lifts its laden boughs
And sees with wonder what strange leaves it bears
And fruitage not its own.

Not all one kind

Are strong elms, willows, or the cypress glooms
Of Ida, or the lotos trees; not one
Are the rich olives, spindle-shaped, or round,
Or bitter-oiled; all sorts of apples fine
And many a fruit Alcinous' orchards bear.
So the Crustumians, the bergamots,
And big pound-pears come not upon one stem.
Nor is the vintage of our native vine
Like grape of Lesbos in Methymna grown.
The Thasian wines we know and white Egyptian,
One from fat soil and one from sandy sprung.
Psithian is raisin-wine, and Lageos
Will soon betray thy feet and stop thy tongue.
Purples and early-ripes there are, — but what

Of wine Cisalpine? Few would call it peer
Of the Falernian cask. The Aminaean
Are wines of body and outranking far
Both Lydian mount and Chian promontory.
The lesser Argite grape surpasses all
In plenteous juice and quality that lasts
Year after year. The wine of Rhodes I sing,
Good for libation and the banquet's end,
And thee, Bumastus, — how thy clusters swell!
But of the multitude of names and kinds
There is no reckoning and all numbers fail.
Let him attempt it who would guess the sands
Whirled by swift blasts along the Libyan wild,
Or number, when the galleys meet great gales,
The surge of waves along Ionian shores.
But all lands have not power all gifts to bear:
Willows spring up by streams, and alders thrive
In bogs and mire; but high on rock-strewn hills
The wild ash grows; the shores of lake or sea
Have groves of myrtle; while on sunny slopes
The wine-god smiles, and yews love wind and cold.

See how the world's remotest bound is tilled
By far-off husbandmen: the Arabs dwell
Where morn first breaks, and in cold Scythia rove
Tattooed Geloni. Trees are likewise born
In separate fatherlands: black ebony
Is India's boast alone, the incense-tree
Breathes but in Araby. What need to name
That wood which oozes balsam, or the fruit
Of evergreen acanthus? or the groves

Of Aethiopia whitened with soft wool ?
Or silken Seres and their skill to comb
Translucent fleeces from the leaves of trees
Which ocean-bordering India bears, which seems
Earth's last retreat ? For no far-soaring flight
Of arrows e'er can pass that forest's crown,
Though bowmen mighty are, the people's pride.
Media the healthful citron bears, its juice
Bitter, but lingering long upon the tongue.
Than which none better (if some step-dame fell
Have mixed her simples, singing fearful charms)
To bring swift help and mightily expel
The secret venom from her victim's bones.
Tall and like laurel is this citron tree,
And but for the far-wafted strange perfume,
Laurel 'twould be; no wind can loose its leaf;
The blossoms, too, cling fast. With this the Medes
Sweeten their bad breath, and with this they cure
An old man's rheums.

But neither flowering groves

Of Media's rich realm, nor Ganges proud,
Nor Lydian fountains flowing thick with gold,
Can match their glories with Italia;
Not Bactria nor Ind, nor all the wealth
Of wide Arabia's incense-bearing sands.

This land by Jason's bulls with breath of flame
Never was ploughed, nor planted with the teeth
Of monstrous dragon, nor that harvest grew
Of helmèd warrior-heads and myriad spears.
But full-eared corn and goodly Massic wine
Inhabit here, with olives and fat herds.

The war-horse here with forehead high in air
Strides o'er the plain; here roam thy spotless flocks,
Clitumnus; and for noblest sacrifice,
The snow-white bull, bathed oft in sacred stream,
Leads Roman triumphs to the house of Jove.
Here Spring is endless and the Summer glows
In months not half her own. Twice in the year
The herds drop young, and twice the orchard bears
The labor of its fruit. But tigers fell
And the fierce lion's brood are absent here.
No deadly aconite deceives the hand
That gathers herbs; nor in enormous folds
Or lengthened twine the scaly snake upcoils.
Behold the famous cities — what vast toil
Upreared them! — and the host of strongholds piled
By hand of man on out-hewn precipice,
While swift streams under ancient bulwarks flow.
Why tell of two salt seas that wash her shore
Above, below; her multitude of lakes, —
Thee, Larius, chiefest, and Benacus where
Are swelling floods and billows like the sea ?
Why name that haven where the lofty mole
Locks in the Lucrine lake, while with loud rage
The baffled waters roar, and Julian waves
Echo from far the sea's retreating tide,
And through the channels of Avernus pours
Th' invading Tuscan main? In this rich land
Deep veins of silver show, and ores for brass,
With lavish gold. Hence sprang the warlike breed
Of Marsi, hence the proud Sabellian clans,
Ligurians to hardship seasoned well,

And Volscian spearmen; hence the Decii,
Camilli, Marii, immortal names,
The Scipios, in wars implacable,
And Caesar, thou, the last, the prince of all,
Who now victorious on far Asia's end,
Art holding back from Roman citadels
The Indian weakling. Hail, O Saturn's land,
Mother of all good fruits and harvests fair,
Mother of men! I for thy noble sake
Attempt these old and famous themes and dare
Unseal an age-long venerated spring
And uplift Hesiod's song o'er Roman towers.

Now for the soils and of their native powers:
First, the bad lands, the hills ungenerous,
With spongy marl and gravel and thick thorns,
Can bloom with clusters unto Pallas dear
Of long-enduring olive; such are known
If on the same field oleasters throng,
And scatter on the ground their sylvan fruit.
But where rich mould is, moist and prosperous,
With much green herb — a field of fertile breast,
Such as from some cool, hollow mountain-glen
We oft look o'er, where tall cliffs from above
Small streams drop down and bring their gift of loam,
A southward slope, and bearing crops of fern,
That pest of ploughmen, — such a land some day
Will bear sound vines and grapes of plenteous juice;
Many its clusters, and in Bacchus' praise
'Twill give such wine as pours from cups of gold
When on his ivory flute, the altars nigh,

The full-cheeked Tuscan blows, and on curved trays
We bear the smoking entrails to the god.
But if with kine and calves thy business be,
Or new-born lambs, or garden-spoiling goats,
Seek prosperous Tarentum's distant glens,
Or pastures such as ill-starred Mantua lost,
Where swans snow-white in green-sedged waters feed.
There shall thy flocks find many a fountain free
And grass unfailing; for what each long day
Thy creatures take, the short night's cooling dews
Restore in full.

Earth that is almost black,
Rich when upturned, a loose and crumbling soil,
Such as ploughs make by art, for all grain-crops
Is fittest; from no other wide-spread mead
So many loaded wains at eve are drawn
By slow-paced oxen home. Or choose some field
From which erewhile the farmer, frowning hard,
Dragged off the forest and destroyed a grove
So long unprofitable, — every root
He takes, and lofty tops, the dwelling-place
Of birds year after year, who quit their nests
And skyward soar; yet soon the boorish land
By ploughshare furrowed, comes out dressed and fine.
But hillocks of dry gravel scarcely yield
Wild cassias for thy bees and rosemary.
A scaling tufa, or loose chalk with holes
By black snakes eaten in, — no lands like these
For winding lairs of serpents and their food.
But if the downs exhale white mist at morn
With shifting vapors and take in at will

Moist air or breathe it forth, and ever wear
Their own fresh, grassy mantle, yet not stain
With salty scales of rust the plough's bright blade,
Such land will wreath the elm with fruitful vines;
Plenteous in olives too; the farmer's toil
Finds it to herds a friend and to his plough
Obedient. Such land rich Capua tills;
Such the Vesuvian slopes, where Clanius flows,
Acerrae's waster and unpitying foe.

I now set forth what way each kind of soil
Can be distinguished. Would you test
Its lightness or unwonted heaviness —
Since one for corn is apter, one for wine,
Heavy for Ceres, for the Wine-god, light, —
Seek out a likely spot, and bid them sink
A deep pit in the ground; then shovel back
All the earth taken and stamp down the top
Till level; if the mass fall short, the soil
Is light, and fertile for flock-pasturing
Or plenteous vines; but if the earth refuse
To go back whence it came, the soil is thick;
Look for rebellious clods and furrow it
With sturdy oxen. Then some land is salt
And bitter, so they say, for fruits unfit,
Ungentle to the plough, where Bacchus' grapes
Degenerate, and choice apples lose their praise.
Test it as follows: take down willow crates
From smoky roof-tree, or the strainers hung
From wine-press beam, and in them thrust this soil
Mixed with some clear spring-water, and stamp down

Till all the water be forced out, and drops —
Large, round ones — through the baskets run.
The savor will be proof, if those who taste
Pucker their faces at its bitterness.
Next, a rich soil is known by one sure sign:
It never breaks when tossed from palm to palm
But clings to the smeared fingers like soft pitch.
A wet land grows rank weeds, but is in fact
Too fertile; let not mine o'er-generous be,
Nor give my corn's first blades excess of power.
To tell what soil is heavy, what is light,
The mere weight shows. And one can judge by sight
Whether too black, or of what hue so-e'er.
But to detect if that curst chill it hides
Is very hard, — tough pines and baneful yews
Or rambling ivies dark are oft a sign.

But all this noted, take industrious care
To let the land be long time dried in the sun.
Carve the hills deep with trenches, and long time
Before you plant the joyful vine, expose
The upturned clod where blow the northern winds.
Fields of loose earth are best; winds, chilling frosts,
And sturdy digging of the broken field,
Will make it such.

Some men who spare no pains
Find two like fields: in one young shoots of trees
Are set, but to the other carried soon,
Lest the new slips their change of home refuse.
Some even write the quarters of the sky
Upon the bark, that as the tree faced first

It may remain — one side to sultry south,
The other to the pole. So loth to change
Are a young creature's ways.

✓

But first inquire
Whether on hills or plain to set thy vines.
If rich and level be the land you choose,
Plant close, for vines give no less plenteous yield
When close; but for a mounded land or hills
Steep sloping, set in fair and ordered lines,
Planting the vines with measure scrupulous,
Till each long path with every crossing squares.
Thus oft the long-drawn legion's bulk deploys
Its cohorts for vast war, and all the line
Stands visibly afield with marshalled front,
While far and wide the land in waves of light
Is glittering with steel; not yet
Begins the grim strife; 'twixt the hosts in arms
The War-god dubious of the issue strays.

So must the vineyard have its spaces laid
In measures just, not only to rejoice
Some idle gazer's mind, but that this way
The earth lends equal shares of life to all,
And with free room the branching shoots extend.
You ask, perhaps, what depth of trench is best.
The vines in mere light furrow, as I think,
'Tis safe to plant; but deeper in the ground
Far down make fast the tree, and most of all
The oak, which far as toward th' ethereal sky
Its crest uprears, so far to space below
Sends forth the roots to Tartarus; no winds,

No shock of wintry gale nor drenching storm
O'erwhelm its power; unvanquished it abides
Even to children's children, and outlives
In vigorous age full many a mortal span;
Reaching its boughs far round like giant's arms,
It bears with bulk unpropped its burdening shade.
Face not your vineyards to the setting sun.
Suffer no hazels planted there, nor prune
The end-stalks, nor from very tree-top take
Your cuttings, for plants love to live near earth;
Nor clip young budding stems with knife not keen;
Nor let wild-olive poles be used; for oft
From careless shepherds a chance spark will fall,
Which first hides smouldering in the oily bark,
Keeping the solid wood; soon unconfin'd
It gets the leaves above and fills the air
With roarings loud; then on from bough to bough
Pursues, till to the loftiest crests its power
Triumphant spreads, o'ermantles all the grove
With glare of flames, drives heavenward a cloud
Thick and pitch-black; and if by chance should fall
A sweep of storm, o'erbrooding all the hills,
Its blast drives on the swelling fires. No more
Can vines thereafter grow, not even their roots,
Nor pruning close draw greenness from that ground,
Only the bitter-leaved wild olive lives.

But let no counsellor, though ne'er so sage,
Bid you the crusted field disturb when blows
The wind of Boreas, and cold winter seals
The land with frost, nor lets the scattered seeds

Or stiffened roots make dwelling in the ground.
Set vines at seed-time, when the blush of Spring
Brings back the stork, of long, black snakes the foe;
Or at first autumn coolness, when the sun
Has driven his steeds not yet to winter's bound,
Though summer is no more. But, sooth, 'tis Spring
Lends leafing orchard and the woodside green
Her help and succor; in the Spring the earth
Swells warm and bids the seeds of life begin.
Then will th' almighty Sire from heights of air
Descend in life-engendering showers to fill
Earth's bosom, his glad spouse, and mightily
With her vast body mingling, brings to power
All unborn things she bears. With song-birds then
The tangled brakes are loud, and lowing herds —
Their season due — live o'er their mating days.
The whole earth's womb is travailing; the land
Spreads bare its bosom to the warm west wind,
And gentle dews feed all. The bladed grass
Climbs boldly upward to the sun's young beams;
The tendrilled vine shrinks not from gathering storm
Nor rout of wind-swept northern rains, but thrusts
Her soft buds forth and every leaf unfolds.
Such were the days, I could believe, that glowed
When earth her growth began, — such even course
That season kept; all winds from east and north
Forebore their wintry blasts; the first flocks then
Drank in the radiant air; with lifted head
Man's iron breed from stone-strewn fields arose;
Beasts through the woods and stars through heaven
went forth.

For new-born, tender things had ne'er endured
Life's labor, but that 'twixt too hot or cold
This time of quiet interposing stays,
And earth 'neath heaven's indulgence rests and smiles.

But to proceed: o'er young vines set afield
Scatter rich stores of dung, and carefully
Heap high with earth; or spade in porous stones
Or rough, old shells, that streams of trickling rain
May through them glide, or light-blown mists steal down.
Thus all the plants will thrive. Some husbandmen
Press flat stones over them and heavy mass
Of potsherds, — bulwark against beating showers,
Or when the sultry Dog Star splits the field
In thirsty cracks. Next, after planting thus,
Do much loose raking, even to the roots,
Or sometimes stir the soil by ploughing deep,
Guiding the trampling cattle's feet with care
Between the rows of vines. Then choose smooth reeds
And peelèd wands, like spears, and ashwood poles,
And stakes two-pronged, by which each shelf of vine
May have strong props and heed no wind that blows,
But climb from bough to bough up the tall elm.
While the young vine is leafing its first green,
Be to its softness kind. While the gay sprout
Gads in the breeze and skyward leaps uncurbed,
Attempt no pruning yet with sickle keen,
But with your thumb and finger pluck the leaves,
Selecting wisely. Later when the stems,
Grown stalwart, clasp the elms in close embrace,
Then dress their locks and shear the branches well.

Ere this the knife but mars, yet now is time
To leash in strict control the straggling boughs.

Make wattled hedges, too, to hold away
Creatures of every kind, and most of all
While yet the soft crest fears no coming harm.
For worse than winters wild or scorching suns
Is when huge buffaloes or raiding goats
Run crowding in, or sheep seek pasture there,
Or greedy cows. No cold, nor heavy cloak
Of silver frost, nor even the smiting rays
From rocks burnt dry, harm vines as such beasts do,
Whose merciless, foul teeth make lasting scars.
For this sole crime, where Bacchus' altars rise,
The goat is ever victim: o'er the stage
Strut the quaint mimes at revel; Theseus' sons
At cross-road meeting place or hamlet gay
Garland the winning wits, then from full cups
Rise flushed and jolly, and on green-sward fair
Dance among wine-skins. Even so,
Ausonia's husbandmen, the breed of Troy,
Make careless verse and mocking laughter loud,
And direful masks of hollowed bark put on.
Then jubilant songs, O Bacchus, shout thy name,
And from some lofty pine thine emblems swing.
Now every vineyard with large clusters ripe
Is bursting, every rounded vale runs o'er,
And deep hill-gorges, if the Wine-god there
His worship'd head have shown. Therefore we sing
With fitting rites the praise to Bacchus due,
Carol old songs and march with bread and bowl

Where led up horn-wise to our altar green
The goat awaits his offering; erewhile
On rods of hazel the fat caul we turn.

Yet for the laborers in the vineyard waits
A further toil, of which there is no end.
For yearly the whole field must furrowed be
Thrice and again, and everlastinglly
The clods be broke with mattock deeply driven,
And all the planting clean-stripped of its leaves.
The labors of the husbandmen return
In cycles sent, as th' heaven-encircling year
Doth its old paths pass o'er. For even when
The vineyard its last leaf has lost, and cold
Winds of the north fling off the forest's crown,
The farmer even then prolongs his toils
Into the opening year, and with curved edge
Of Saturn's sickle shearing, pruning still,
Pursues his naked vine and shapes it round.
Be earliest, I counsel, to dig o'er
Your field, be first to burn the boughs
You bear away in bundles, and to bring
The poles and props safe home; but be the last
To gather harvest in. Vines put forth shade
Excessive twice a year, and twice thick thorns
And tares would choke their yield; 'gainst either ill
Hard task it is to strive. Therefore admire
Wide-spreading acres; let your own be few.

Besides, in woodlands prickly stems of broom
Must gathered be, tall reeds at river's marge,

And osiers wild, with which the vines are bound.
No pruning now, but o'er his finished rows
The toil-worn keeper of the vineyard sings.
Yet even now the soils must be raked loose,
The dry earth not let crust; and even when ripe
The cluster's peril is Jove's rainy sky.
Far otherwise, the olive's growth requires
Slight skill or care: of sickle's rounded blade
Or harrows diligent they have no need;
But when well rooted in the clod, resist
Assaulting winds. The common soil supplies
Moisture enough, and broken by the plough
Full fruitage gives. Therefore fail not to plant
The plenteous olive, blessed leaf of peace.

Fruit orchards, in like wise, when on firm stock
Once grafted, have a native energy
And by their own impulsion skyward climb,
Not asking help of ours. And equally
The greenwood wild its proper harvest shows
Of crimson berries on bird-haunted boughs.
Clover grows wild. The loftier forest gives
Our torches and the hearthstone's night-long fire
With liberal light. Who but must grateful be
Such gifts to labor for? Why further tell
Of willows pale or broom-plant's lowly stem,
Which feed the flock, afford the shepherd shade
And hedge his garden's close with honied flowers?
How fair the sight of wind-swept boxwood groves,
Of orient birth! or fir trees, mountain-born,
And beauteous lands that owe no debt or wage

To implement of man! The barren woods
On highest Caucasus, which furious winds
Tear limb from limb and tireless whirl away,
These too give profit: serviceable pine
For building ships, cypress and cedar beams
For roof and dwelling-place; the husbandmen
Now fashion spokes, now hew them solid wheels
For harvest wain, now fit the spreading keels
Of river craft. The willows bear a crop
Of basketry and withe, elm leaves are good
For food and bedding, myrtle boughs are strong
For javelins, cornel gives help in war,
And yew trees bend them to fair Syrian bows.
Smooth lindens, too, and boxwood, to the lathe
So yielding, take fair shapes and let keen blades
Hollow them out; the buoyant alder swims
Along swift swollen waves, launched on the Po;
While in the cavernous bark and crumbling bole
Of huge holm-oak the bees their cities hide.
What equal praise can Bacchus' gift receive,
Bacchus, so oft occasioner of sin?
Frenzied with him the Centaurs were laid low
In death, — so Rhoetus, Pholus, also died.
And lo! Hylaeus o'er the Lapithae
Swings terrible the monster drinking-bowl!

Oh, more than blest, if their true bliss they knew,
Are tillers of the land! whose sustenance
From civil faction far, the righteous earth
Ungrudgingly bestows. Their house at morn
Sends forth no lengthening stream of flatterers

From crowded halls through lofty gates of pride;
No columns with rich tortoise jewelled o'er
Wound envious eyes, nor hangings prankt with gold,
Nor brass Corinthian, nor once virgin wool
Tainted with Tyrian poison, nor clean oil
Of olive with lascivious odors fouled.
But peace is theirs untroubled and a life
From falsehoods free, their riches manifold
Are calm, with ample fields, pools fountain-fed
Caverns of rest in cold Thessalian vale,
The lowing herd, soft slumber under trees,
Green upland coverts, haunt of creatures wild.
Their youth in labors indefatigable
Is schooled to few desires; the gods receive
Fit sacrifice and festal, and old age
Is hallowed. 'Twas among such country folk
The Virgin Justice, when she quit mankind,
Left her last footprints upon earthly ground.

My fondest prayer is that the Muses dear,
Life's joy supreme, may take me to their choir,
Their priest, by boundless ecstasy possessed.
The heavenly secrets may they show, the stars,
Eclipses of the sun, the ministries
Of the laborious moon, why quakes the earth,
And by what power the oceans fathomless
Rise, bursting every bound, then sink away
To their own bed; why wintry suns so swift
Roll down to ocean's stream; what obstacle
Opposes then the lingering wheels of night.
But if to such mysterious domain

Nature debar my entrance, if the blood
Flows not so potent in my colder breast,
Make me true lover of fair field and farm,
Of streams in dewy vales, of rivers broad
And lonely forests, far from pomp and fame.
Oh, for Thessalian wilds and mountain steeps
Where rove the maenads of Laconia,
Or in the glens of snowy Thrace to dwell
In shadow of innumerable boughs!

Blest was that man whose vision could explore
The world's prime causes, conquering for man
His horde of fears, his certain doom of death
Inexorable, and the menace loud
Of hungry Acheron! Yet happy he
Who knows a shepherd's gods, protecting Pan,
Sylvan of hoary head, and sisterhoods
Of nymphs in wave and tree. He lives unmoved
By public honors or the purple pall
Of kingly power, or impious strife that stirs
'Twixt brothers breaking faith, or barbarous host
Of Dacian raiders from the rebel shores
Of Danube, or by Rome's imperial care
And kingdoms doomed to die; he need not weep
For pity of the poor, nor lustful-eyed
View great possessions. He plucks mellow fruit
From his own orchard trees and gathers in
The proffered harvest of obedient fields.
Of ruthless laws, the forum's frenzied will,
Of public scrolls of deed and archive sealed,
He nothing knows. Let strangers to such peace

Trouble with oars the boundless seas or fly
To wars, and plunder palaces of kings;
Make desolate whole cities, casting down
Their harmless gods and altars, that one's wine
May from carved rubies gush, and slumbering head
On Tyrian pillow lie. A man here hoards
His riches, dreaming of his buried gold;
Another on the rostrum's flattered pride
Stares awe-struck. Him th' applause of multitudes,
People and senators, when echoed shouts
Ring through the house approving, quite enslaves.
With civil slaughter and fraternal blood
One day such reek exultant, on the next
Lose evermore the long-loved hearth and home.

Meanwhile the husbandman upturns the glebe
With well-curved share, inaugurating so
The whole year's fruitful toil, by which he feeds
His native land, his children's children too,
His flocks and herds, and cattle worth his care.
Ever the gifts flow on: the liberal year
Teems with good apples, with the flock's increase,
And sheaves of tasselled corn; the furrowed fields
Bestow in bursting barns their goodly store.
When winter comes at last, the olive mills
Receive the sacred fruit, the roving swine
Bring home full paunch of acorns, greenwood trees
Drop nut and berry, many autumn fruits
Still linger, and on sun-kissed, rocky slopes
Some sweetened clusters hang. The livelong year
His gathered children to his kisses cling.

His honest house lives chastely; full of milk
Is all his herd, and on his meadows fair
The lusty he-goats lock their butting horns.
Such master keeps full well each festal day.
Couched on green turf around the central fire,
The revellers with garlands wreath the bowl
Pouring to thee, Lenaeus, with due prayer.
For all the shepherds of his flocks he holds
A match at casting spears, on elm-tree trunk
Carving the mark; or for the wrestler's crown
Naked they come with bodies hard as steel.

Such way of life the ancient Sabines knew,
And Remus with his twin; thus waxed the power
Of the Etrurian cities; thus rose Rome
The world's chief jewel, and with towering wall
Compassed in one her hills and strongholds seven.
Yea, and before the Cretan King assumed
The sceptre of the skies, ere impious man
Began on murdered flocks to feast his kind,
Such life on earth did golden Saturn show.
None heard the trumpet's blast, nor direful clang
Of smitten anvils loud with shaping swords.

But now our lengthened course is run to goal;
From necks of steaming steeds we loosen rein.

GEORGIC III

Thee, Pales, mighty power, I next will sing;
And thee Apollo, theme for many a song,
A shepherd once in Thessaly; and ye
O streams and forests of Arcadian Pan!
All other subjects which could charm a mind
At leisure for a song, are they not staled
Even to vulgar ears ? Who has not heard
Of King Eurystheus' pitiless commands
And infamous Busiris' sacrifice ?
Who has not the lost lovely Hylas known,
Or Delos to Latona's travail kind,
High-born Hippodamas, and Pelops proud,
The laurelled, ivory-shouldered charioteer ?

Some new path must be tried if ever I,
With wing uplifted from the level ground,
May on the public voice triumphant rise.
I will be first, if life be given, to bear
Home to my native land the Muses' song
From their Aonian hill. I first to thee,
My Mantua, will bring Arabian palms.
My vows shall build thee in the meadows green
A marble temple near the river's rim,
Where the wide-watered Mincius winding slow
In mantle of soft sedge hides all his shore.
Within the central shrine shall Caesar be
And the whole temple bless. Before his eyes

I, clothed in purple garb victorious,
Will lead a hundred four-horse chariots by,
Along the river-bank; the youth of Greece,
Spurning Olympian or Isthmian crown,
Shall in fleet foot-race for a garland run,
Or box, well paired, with gauntlets of tough hide.
Myself will weave of well-trimmed olive leaf,
A garland for my brows, and offerings bring.
Even now I see with visionary joy
The due procession to the shrine, and death
Of fair, white bulls.

Or haply there shall be

A theatre with shifting scene; and when
The purple curtain lifts to hide the stage,
The suppliant Britons shall be broidered there.
I'll carve in massy ivory and gold
On temple doors the wars of India's sons
Against the Roman's ever prosperous arms.
There too the pictured streams of Nile shall move
With mighty flood and swollen waves of war.
And lofty columns decked with beaks of brass
Shall rise in air. Hard by them shall appear
All Asia's prostrate towns, and snowy peaks
Of far Armenia smitten and subdued.
The Parthian in undaunted flight will hurl
His wingèd barbs behind; and I will show
Two trophies, from far-sundered nations won,
And twice subdued, to grace his triumph day,
With tribes in chains from either ocean's shore.
There I will raise in breathing Parian stone
The statues of his far-descended line

The offspring of Assaracus, the men
Of Jove's begetting, kingly sires of Troy,
And Troy's first builder, the bright Cynthian god.
Envy accurst, unhappy, will behold
Avenging Furies and with terror see
The cruel stream of Hades, the coiled snakes,
And Sisyphus with ever frustrate stone.

But ere such song is mine, I must abide
In leafy forest and untrodden glades
Among the wood-nymphs. O Maecenas, thou
Hast laid this not light task upon my muse.
Without thy help and smile my thoughts attempt
Nothing of noble note. Up then! away!
Tarry no more! I hear the huntsmen fling
Their loud halloo along Cithaeron's vale,
The hounds of Sparta run and noble steeds,
The pride of Argos, while the vocal groves
Make answering duplications of the sound.
Yet shall I at no distant hour be bold
To gird me for a song in Caesar's praise,
His famous battles tell, and send his fame
To future ages distant as the day
Of old Tithonus' birth from Caesar's own.

Whoe'er ambitious for Olympian palms,
Breeds horses or strong bullocks for the plough,
Must make the choice of mothers his first care.
For cattle, take one of grim-lowering brows
With ugly head, strong neck, and dew-lap dropped
From chin to knee; and be the generous flank

Long to excess; let every part appear
Of large proportion, even her wide-spread hoof
And thick-shagged ears beneath the twisted horn.
One with white spots I favor most, whose head
Butts at the yoke rebelliously; her look
Is rather like a bull's; her stature tall;
Her tail-tip sweeps her hoof-prints as she goes.
The age for motherhood and Hymen's laws
Ceases at ten years, ripens after four;
Her later time is neither apt to breed
Nor vigorous for the plough. Take heed likewise
To choose the sires while the flush of youth
Still in the herd prevails. Delay not long
The mating of young cattle, but supply
An oft succeeding offspring to the herd.
Life's first, best season soon takes flight away
From hapless, mortal creatures; then disease
Arrives, with weariness and sad old age,
Till death, the harsh and ruthless, sweeps away.
Thy herd has always certain few whose shape
Thou seekest to improve. Let them breed oft;
And lest too late thou watch its numbers wane,
Foster each year the fruitful tribe's increase.

Breed horses with not less selective skill;
The males, who give the breed increase,
Watch from their tenderest youth. The colt
Of noble line steps somewhat loftily
Along the field, and his soft pasterns show
An easy motion. Bold is he, and prompt
To try a strange path, ford a threatening stream,

Or dare an unknown bridge, nor has he fear
Of harmless noises. His neck arches high,
The head is outlined clear, the belly short,
Back broad; his vigorous and brawny breast
Has swelling muscles. The superior hues
Are dappled or bright bay, the least approved
Are white and sorrel. If the clash of arms
Rings from afar, he will not be restrained;
His ears prick up, the limbs quake, and he pours
From eager nostrils the swift-gathering fire.
Luxuriant his mane, which tosses free
Down his right shoulder; twixt his ample loins
The chine runs double; deep into the ground
Cuts his resounding hoof of ponderous horn.
Such steed was Cyllarus who felt the reins
Of Pollux, Leda's son; such also they,
Renowned in Grecian song, the well-matched team
Of Mars; or that immortal pair which drew
The chariot of Peleus' mighty son:
Such also was swift Saturn, when he fled
His jealous wife's discovery, and flung
From neck disguised a stallion's rippling mane,
Lifting to Pelion's top a loud, shrill neigh.

But even such, if sickness drag him down
Or in slow lapse of years he droop and fail,
Hide safe at home and mercifully spare
His not despised old age. An aged steed
Is cold to Venus' call and fruitlessly
Attempts th' unwelcome proof; or if erewhile
He rise to the encounter, his heat burns

In vain, as oft an ineffectual fire
Runs on through stubble. Therefore chiefly note
The horse's years and of what quality
His mettle and condition; after this
What sort his sires have bred, and if he seem
To sorrow in defeat and feel proud joy
When winner of the palm. Who has not seen
In what impetuous contest o'er the plain
The rival chariots from the barrier pour,
While kindling hopes the charioteers impel,
And throbs of fear each eager heart possess ?
Along the twisted lash they forward lean
And fling free rein; on speeds the burning wheel;
Now plunging low, now leaping to the sky,
Through vacant air the wild yoke seems to rise
Or on the winds to soar; no stop or stay;
Up rolls the yellow dust; their smoking flanks
Reek with hot foam-flakes and the followers' breath.
So dear to them is praise, and victory
So worth the pains!

'Twas Erichthonius

Who first dared yoke him in the chariot
Four steeds together and o'er whirling wheels
Drive forth to victory. The Lapithae
Of Thessaly were earliest to lay
The rein on mounted barb and bid him move
Obedient in the ring; they lessoned first
The noble knight-at-arms to pace the ground
With lofty-curvetting on stately steed.
Each kind of horsemanship needs equal care;
In either the wise masters of the art

Choose mettle, spirit, speed, and hot, young blood,
Though haply once some older horse has chased
The flying foe in war, or boasts a sire
Of famous lineage from Epirus' shore,
Or walled Mycenae, or of ancient breed
Traced back to Neptune's primal gift divine.
These points observed, men train the chosen sire
Against the breeding-time with generous fare,
And strive to make the husband of the herd
Full-fleshed and strong; they cut him tender grass,
Give corn and much fresh water, that his strength
Suffice him for his labor of delight;
For none but weak colts come of ill-fed sires.
The herd of mares however is reduced
To leanness, by design; and when the heat
For mating first appears, they are restrained
From cropping leafy food or drinking long
At copious springs; 'tis often well-advised
To run them hard and sweat them in the sun
What time the threshing floor is heaped up high
With trodden corn, and clouds of chaff are flung
Abroad upon the winnowing, western wind.
This do they lest fertility should fail,
As if in furrows rankly overgrown;
And that the procreant power be entertained
With appetite, and hidden deep away.

After the mating days one watches less
The weal of sires, and mothers need thy care.
When they have wandered with a burdened womb,
For months gone by, no longer such employ

Yoked in a loaded wain, nor urge them on
At gallop o'er the highway, or allow
To hurry through the fields and swollen streams.
But in still valleys let them feed, beside
Smooth-watered streams, where beds of moss abound,
Or soft, green grass grows nigh the river's edge,
Or sheltering caves o'erarch with rock-thrown shade.
But near the woods of Silarus, and where
Alburnus' ilex groves wear living green,
A gad-fly swarms (whose native Roman name,
Asilus, turns to Oestros in the Greek).
'Tis merciless, and with vociferous rage
Whirs loud, till oft whole herds in panic wild
Run scattering through the wood; the smitten sky
And all the forests by thy shallow stream,
Tanagrus, echo far the bellowing sound.
Once Juno with this cruel prodigy
Wreaked her revenge, when she contrived to plague
The heifer Io, chased from land to land.
This insect which beneath the blaze of noon
Is fiercer yet, must to thy pregnant herd
Never come nigh; 'twere better thou shouldst drive
Afield at early dawn, or let them feed
When dim stars lead the vanguard of the night.

After their birth, transfer thy skill and care
To the young calves, and brand them every one
With marks of pedigree, or signs to tell
Which shall be breeders, which to altars brought
For sacrifice, or which shall plough the ground,
Breaking the clod in rough, unfurrowed fields.

The general herd may roam the meadows green,
But those that for some useful rustic toil
Thou wouldst prepare, must, while but tender calves,
Be disciplined, and lessoned to obey
In docile youth's responsive, plastic hour.
First braid beneath their throats an easy band
Of pliant osier; when the necks, once free,
Accept this servitude, then match in pairs,
Joining the collars, and compel the team
To walk in step; soon let them daily draw
Unloaded wagons through the field, and make
Light hoofprints in the dust; but afterward
Let laboring, beechen axle creak and strain
Beneath their burden, and the brass-tipped pole
Compel the wheels below. Nor at this time
Keep thy half-broken steers on grass alone,
Nor niggard willow-leaf and swamp-grown reeds,
But feed them grain by hand. Nor let the cows
Brim the white milk-pails full, as used to be
The habit of our fathers, but each day
Give generous udders to their offspring dear.

But if thy hopes and wishes rather turn
To war, to troops of charging cavalry,
Or where Alpheus rolls to speed swift wheels
At Elis, and by Pisa's olives wild
Hallowed of Jove, to urge the flying car, —
See that thy chosen courser early learns
To face proud warriors in arms, to bear
The scream of trumpet and the thundering
Of chariots as they pass; in the stall, too,

Let him hear clanking bit and bridle chain.
He must exult if his dear rider's voice
Shout in his praise, and love the friendly hand
That clasps his neck so loud. These noises all
From the first day that weans him from his dam
Should often meet his ear. Put soft bits too
Between his tender lips while yet his frame
Is trembling, weak and scarcely touched of time.
After three summers past, the fourth at hand,
Train him to gallop circles and to prance
With even-sounding step, to paw the air
With freely-lifted knees. His work should show
Strong effort; afterward the racer's speed
Will shame the winds, as under loosened rein
Along the open course he skims, he flies,
Scarce printing his light hoof-tips in the sand.
'Tis like that wind from Hyperborean clime
That charging down o'er Scythia's wintry plains
Scatters the rainless clouds; the harvest fields
Of bending corn and liquid lakes outspread
Heave in the ceaseless blast; the forest's top
Screams loud, and long waves pound the sandy shore,
As onward sweeps the gale o'er flood and field.
Such steed will sweat him at Olympian goals.
Circling the race-course, bathed in bloody foam,
Or haply with an easier yoke will bear
Some traveller's coach along the Belgic land.

When schooled and broken thus, thou mayst allow
Corn liberally mixed, and let his frame
Yet larger grow; but if an untrained colt

Feed high, his spirits will too much abound,
And even if harnessed, will not deign to bear
The sinuous lash or heed hard-curbing reins.
But naught of discipline so fortifies
A powerful beast as that he be restrained
From joy of Venus and blind passion's goad,
Whether the bull or stallion be thy care.
Therefore the bull is exiled and confined
In lonely fields, where ramparts of steep hills
Confront him or wide-sundering waters flow,
Or at full mangers captive must he stand.
Sight of his female wastes his strength away
By slow degrees, and bids him seek no more
Green pasture or cool woodland; for her charm
Sweetly entices, and her wooers proud
In horn-locked duel the wild suit decide.

Behold on mighty Sila's uplands broad
That fair-flanked heifer in the herbage green!
Yonder the bulls, exchanging many a wound,
Do battle mightily; dark streaming gore
Their bodies bathes, as with opposèd horns
Struggling and thrusting they make bellowings loud,
While groves and vaulted skies the din prolong.
No longer now the rivals in that war
Dwell in one field; the fallen chief withdraws,
Bound to far exile in some land unknown,
Lamenting loud his shame, and many a wound
The haughty victor gave; but mourning more
The loss of her he loved, still unavenged,
He quits with backward glance his native fields.

Henceforth he tests and trains his vanquished powers
With painful care; he sullenly reclines
On bare stones for a bed, and for his food
Crops thorny leafage or sharp-pointed reed.
He puts himself to proof; he disciplines
The fury of his horns; butts at a tree;
Would with his fierce thrusts wound the passing wind,
And tosses up loose turf, rehearsing war.
Soon gathering all his force, with strength renewed
He flings his banners forth, provokes the war,
And hurls him headlong on the slumbering foe.
'Tis thus some huge wave from the open sea
Begins far off to whiten, then uplifts
Its swelling breast and swiftly landward rolls,
Roars monstrous through the rocks and forward falls
Like a great mountain, while the watery deep
Boils up in whirling, eddying surge and flings
Aloft in air a cloud of darkening sand.

For all terrestrial kinds, or beast or man,
All Ocean's brood and flocks of bright-hued birds
Haste to the same fierce fire. One power of love
Possesses all. Now with unwonted wrath
Forgetful of her whelps, the lioness
Will roam the land; now bears of shapeless mould
Deal death and ravine through the forests wide;
The boar looks wildest now, the tiger's eye
Most terrible. Unhappy is the man
Who travels now the lonely Libyan sands:
Look how his stallion quakes in every limb,
Suddenly smitten, if the nostrils keen

Smell on the wind his mate. No rider's curb
Can hold him back, nor frantic whip restrain
Nor even precipitous rocks and caverned hills,
Nor river in his path, though tumbling waves
Engulf and steal away the mountain's wall.
Now will the wild boar on the Sabine hills
Sharpen his teeth, root up and fling afar
The forest's earth, rub fiercely on a tree
His bristly side and toughen where he may
His shoulders 'gainst a rival's tusky jaw.

What tale of man's impassioned youth to tell ?
When love, unpitying, breathes into the bones
Its boundless fire ? Though bursting clouds of storm
Roughen the barrier firth, the lover swims
Through the black, lingering night, though o'er him howl
The unlocked thunders of the vasty sky,
And breaking seas along the solemn crags
Bid him come back; nor can his parents' tears
Recall him, nor that maiden fond and fair
Doomed in his cruel death herself to die.
Why tell how leopards woo, the spotty team
Of Bacchus' chariot, or hungry tribes
Of wolves and dogs, or of those battles bold
The timorous, mild-eyed stags for love will wage ?
Yet of all raging loves most notable
Is that of mares, and wildest. Venus' self
This quality within them breathed, what time
Hard by the Theban town th' infuriate four
Devoured the luckless Glaucus limb by limb.
The mad lust drives them up the pathless steeps

Of Gargara, or through Bithynian floods
Of thunderous wave, as over hill and stream
Dauntless they swim or climb. Soon as their bones
Kindled with fire (chiefly in the Spring,
For Spring it is that fans the flame anew)
They mount conspicuous rocks, and turn to catch
The breathing zephyr's light caress; for oft,
Wondrous to tell, ere to a husband given,
The west wind makes them teem. Then scatter they
O'er rock-strewn hills and deep-descending dales
Not to the east nor to the rising sun,
But to the north and west, or where the south
Blows, saddening the sky with rain and cold.
Then flows a slimy fluid from their groin
Which shepherds rightly call Hippomanes.
This witches often gather, mix with herbs,
And mutter on the mixture baleful charms.

But time runs by, irreparable time,
As mastered by my subject's charm, I course
Slowly from point to point.

Enough is told

Of herds and horses. Now a second half
Of my large task remains: wool-bearing sheep
To tend, and goats, the shaggy-haired; in this
Is an exceeding toil, but sturdy swains
Find hope of honor so. My mind, not less,
Well knows the toil of mastering in fit words
This humble business. But fond desire
Impels me the Parnassian steep to climb
Through fields still virgin; 'twere great joy to pass

By easy slopes to the Pierian Spring
Where trace of earlier footstep is not seen.
O Pales, awe of shepherds, let thy name
Lend loftier measures to my lowly song.

First I decree that all the sheep shall feed,
While waiting for the leafy Spring's return,
In comfortable folds. Let the hard ground
Be deeply strewn with straw and carpeted
With bundles of fresh fern, lest icy frost
Harm the soft lambs, inducing foul disease
In foot or fell. I also give command
The goats shall have good store of arbute boughs,
And running brooks to drink of. Let the stalls,
Screened from the wind, confront the winter sun
And meet his beam at noon, what time
Aquarius from cold declining star
Drops on the year's last days his dew and rain.
For thy goat-flock needs not less thoughtful care
Than sheep, nor is its use or value less.
Though chosen fleeces dipped in Tyrian dye
Fetch handsome profit, yet the she-goats bear
By twins and triplets; their supply of milk
Is plenteous, and the more the milk-pail foams
From well-drawn udder, richer falls the stream
The more the dug is pressed. Also men sheer
From hoary, pointed chins of Libyan goats
The beard, and their long wavy shag,
To weave a cloth for camps, or for the garb
Of sailors. A goat-flock will find its food
In leafy woodlands and the highest peaks

Of an Arcadian mountain; it will browse
On thorny vines or hardy shrubs that spread
On inaccessible slopes; yet of themselves
Faithfully home they come, and with them lead
Their little ones, when oft they scarce can lift
O'er the high door-sill their full, swinging bags.
Since, then, these ask so little anxious care
Of mortal man, protect them with all heed
From wintry frost and storms of wind and snow:
Give them good fare, fresh twigs, and hay enough
From open barns through all the season's cold.

But when glad summer and the zephyr's voice
Call forth both flocks to dale and meadow green,
Then to cool pastures let us haste along
While beams the morning star and dawn is new,
While every sod is glistening and the flocks
Find on the tender grass the sweet, fresh dew.
But when the day's fourth hour bids thirst return,
And locusts wake the copse with plaintive song,
Then at the wells or cisterns large and full
Deep let the creatures drink a flowing stream
From wooden runnels. Later, at high noon,
Lead to a shaded vale, where Jove's great oak,
Long-lived and strong, flings forth its mighty boughs,
Or where some dark-leaved grove of ilex trees
Sleeps in its solemn shade. A second time
Lead them to watering and feed once more
At sundown, when the cooling twilight star
Makes milder air, and o'er a freshened vale
Rises the dewy moon; from river shore
Kingfishers cry, the finch from briar and thorn.

What if I tell thee in my lengthened rhyme
Of Libyan shepherds, of their far-spread range
And the rude tents they dwell in ? Day and night,
Or for a whole month long, their flocks find food
Over vast deserts roving, — the great plain
Stretches so far. Numidia's herdsman bears
All his wealth with him, house and household gods,
His arms, his faithful dog of Spartan breed,
His Cretan quiver. Carrying so his arms,
The Roman legionary, burdened sore,
Takes his far journey to an alien land,
And fronts his foe before th' expected hour
In well-pitched camp and ordered lines of war.
Far different is man's life where Scythia's tribes
By the wide waters of Maeotis stray,
Where Danube rolls its troubled, tawny waves,
And where the ridge of Thracian Rhodope
To southward curves. All cattle there are kept
In well-closed barns; for in that land is seen
No grass, no greenwood fair, but all the plain
Lies shapeless in great banks of snow,
Frozen deep down and drifted seven ells high.
'Tis winter without end, and ceaseless blows
The frosty northern gale: Seldom the sun
Can break the dismal gloom — nor when his team
Bear him along th' ethereal sky, nor when
He dips his sinking car in crimsoned seas.
On the swift-coursing river suddenly
Congeals a solid crust, and soon the stream
Sustains the rolling weight of iron wheels,
Once a ship's channel, now a wagon road.

Brass cauldrons burst asunder, oftentimes
The garments stiffen on one's body, casks of wine
Are broken piecemeal with an axe, whole ponds
Are turned to solid ice, and icicles
Upon a man's rough beard grow stiff and strong.
The whole wide realm of air continually
Is thick with falling snow, the flocks and herds
Perish, the mighty forms of oxen stand
Frost covered, and a line of huddling deer
Lie torpid under heavy snow, just seen
By their protruding horns. In hunting these
No hounds run forth, no net or snare is laid,
No crimson feathers cheat the trembling herd;
But while they vainly breast the drifted snows
Men slay them at close quarters with sharp steel.
They fall loud moaning, and their conquerors
With shouts of exultation bear them home.
For in large caverns, burrowed under ground,
The hunters live in safety and at ease.
Oak boughs heaped high, whole logs of giant elm
They roll upon the hearth to feed the blaze.
Long nights they pass in wassail and good cheer
And imitate our vintage with full bowls
Of bitter cider and strong, yeasty brews.
Such is the tameless race of mighty men
That keep their flocks beneath the arctic star,
And by Cimmerian tempests buffeted
In tawny furs of beasts their bodies clothe.

If wool thy business be, let prickly shrubs,
Thornbush and burr, be absent from thy fields.

Yet fattening herbage shun, and early choose
White, soft-fleeced sheep, observing well the sires.
For though a ram be spotless, if his tongue
Look black about the palate, then beware
Lest he should blot the fleeces of his breed
With dusky flaws. Go, fetch thee in his stead
Another from thy fields, in fleece all snow.
Arcadian Pan, if ancient lore be true,
Lured thee, O goddess moon, to be his love,
Then won thee and embraced. To wild wood shades
He called thee, and thou didst not scorn the call.
But if thy trade is milk, let thine own hands
Bring heap of lotos leaves and flowering stems
Of the tall clover, and the mangers fill
With salted grass. The flocks then sate their thirst
At flowing streams, their full bags rounding well,
And lending salty relish to the milk.
Some from the dams the new-born kids restrain,
Muzzling their lips with steel. What milk is drawn
At daybreak or in daytime, the next night
Goes to the cheese-press; but if drawn at dark
Or sunset hour, the shepherd in the morn
Carries it curded to the market-place
In wicker bowls, or salting frugally
Shelves it at home to swell his winter store.
Nor be thy dogs last cared for. The swift hounds
Of Sparta or the fierce Molossian breed,
Feed both alike on rich whey. Fear not then
Thieves in the night, nor wolves about thy fold
Nor wandering gipsies creeping up unseen.
Full often with thy dogs thou shalt pursue

The shy wild ass, the rabbit or the doe;
Oft from wet lair in underbrush or fen
Thy dogs shall start the boar and chase him far,
Loud-barking; or along the lofty hills
Vociferous drive into thy net the deer.

Learn also in thy folds betimes to burn
Sweet cedar and with fumes of galbanum
To drive the evil-smelling serpents off.
For under stalls uncared for often lurks
The stinging adder, he that fearful flies
From sunshine; or that snake is there whose haunt
Is under ambush in the darksome ground,
A ruthless scourge of cattle. 'Gainst the earth
He coils close, slavering poison on the herd.
Pick up a stone, my shepherd, find a club!
And where his proud neck stretches, hissing, swoln, —
Down with him! Look how cunningly he hides
His coward head, while all the middle coils
And lengthened tail relax, as winding slow
The last of him is seen. Who has not known
That wicked serpent of Calabrian dales ?
With lifted front his scaled head backward writhes
And the long belly shows great spots and stains.
When rivers from full fountain-heads flow down,
While all the land is wet with showers of Spring
And rains from southward blown, this serpent dwells
In pools and oozy shores, where greedily
With fishes and the ever-babbling frogs
He crams his black maw. When the fen is dry
And the hot soil cracks wide, then leaps he forth

Upon dry land, and with swift eyes of fire
Runs fiercely o'er the pastures, wild with thirst,
And of the heat in terror. Let me then
Not slumber careless out of doors, nor dare
On grass-grown woodland ridge to lie at ease,
What time that creature casting his old skin
Crawls out reclothed and glittering, having left
The eggs or young ones in the hole. Oh, see
That lifted head and quivering, cloven tongue!

Now of the signs and causes let me tell
Of sickness and infection. A foul scab
Attacks thy sheep, when downpours of cold rain
Have chilled them to the bone, and winter fields
Are rough with hoar-frost; or when sweat unclean
Lies on them after shearing and their sides
Are wounded with sharp thorns. 'Tis fearing this
The shepherd lets the whole flock deeply bathe
In rivers pure; the ram, plunged in the pool,
With his drenched fleece is left to float down stream.
Soon after shearing, for good ointment use
The lees of olive oil, quicksilver mixing
With native sulphur and the wholesome tar
Of Ida's pines; wax also melted soft
Juice of sea-onion, potent hellebore
And black bitumen. But no remedy
Brings happier issue to the shepherd's care
Than with a sharp blade to lay open wide
The ulcerous spot; for covered if it be
The poison feeds and spreads the more, — even while
The shepherd, failing of resolve, lays not

A healing hand upon the wound, but sits
Inactive, asking heaven for luckier days.
Moreover even when the pestilence
Strikes the poor, bleating creature's every bone,
His limbs with fever wasting, it works well
To check the kindled fire, severing
Close to the hoof-cleft some blood-spouting vein.
This is the art the wild Bisaltae know,
And fierce Gelonian when he wanders nigh
The peak of Rhodope, or scours the plains
Of lonely Danube, where his drink and food
Is mixture of mare's blood with curds and whey.
But if at distance thou shalt mark some sheep
That creeps too often to the gentle shade,
Listlessly cropping but the tallest grass,
Lagging behind the flock, or as it feeds
Low-crouching in mid-pasture, and at eve
Faring home late alone, — then take thy knife
And cut this blemish from thy folds away
Before among th' unheeding multitude
The dread contagion scatter. For wild winds
That fly before the tempest far at sea
Come not more thick and fast than speedy plagues
Which visit herded beasts. The sickness falls
Not here and there on few, but sweeps along
Whole provinces of pleasant greenwood shade
Effacing dams and sires and all the breed.

This well he knows who e'er has looked upon
Th' aerial Alps, where on the slopes are seen
The Noric citadels and pastures wide
Through which Timavus rolls. One even now

Beholds the shepherd kingdoms desolate
Though many seasons since have passed; the vales,
The spacious glades, lie all untenanted,
For o'er this region in the days gone by
A year of woe from heaven's corrupted air
Descended. Through the autumn's pitiless heat
It still burned on and showered death and bale
On every kind of creature tame or wild.
Even the lakes it poisoned, and infused
Corruption on all forms of food. The way
Of death was strange: when parching fire
Through every vein had run and cramped with pain
Each wretched limb, then back again would flow
A copious humor which insidiously
Corrupted the whole body. Oftentimes
While solemn offerings to the gods were made,
The chosen victim there, his forehead bound
With snow-white woolen fillet, would drop down
Death-stricken, while the aged ministrants
Stared helpless. Or if haply a priest's knife
Had slain already, then the entrails laid
On altar flames burned not; the augur's art
Could make no answer when the people sued.
The sacrificial knife bore scarce a stain
Of blood, and the light surface of the sand
Was scarcely darkened by the sickly stream.
Then all in flowery pasture-lands the beasts
Lay dying, and at mangers full of corn
Breathed their dear lives away; fierce madness fell
On dogs of gentlest kind; a racking cough
Attacked the swine and strangled their fat throats.

The horse that took the palm now has no care
For any task or test; he crops no more
The pastures green, and will no longer taste
The flowing rill, but stamps upon the ground
With restless foot; his ears lie limp and low,
He sweats all over fitfully, that cold
Sweat of a dying creature; or his skin
Is parched, and if you stroke it, stiff and hard.
These are the symptoms of the warning days
Before the outbreak. But as more and more
The plague has gathered power, both his eyes
With fever glow, and all his laboring breath
Is deeply drawn, sometimes with piteous groan
And sobs that shake his sides; his nostrils flow
With darkened blood, the rough tongue seems to cleave
To the infected cavities. At first
'Twas helpful to pour down a draught of wine
From flowing horn, which seemed the one last hope
To save the dying beast; but later on
This remedy was death. With force renewed
The fevers raged, and in death's agony
Their own white teeth their flesh in sunder tore.
May heaven from all the righteous turn away
Such curse, and send it on their enemies!

See the bull also! 'neath the ploughshare's weight
His sides steam, and he falls; his foamy lips
Are dripping blood, and soon he groans his last.
His master sad at heart takes off the yoke
From mated steer that moans his brother's death,
And in mid furrow leaves the useless plough.

Yet will the freed bull take no comfort now
In shade of lofty grove or meadow green,
Nor where, leaving its rockstrewn bed, the stream
Clearer than amber meets the widening plain.
For soon his flanks hang down, his heavy eyes
Are darkened with down-drooping weariness,
The neck hangs near the ground. Ah, what avail
The creature's sober tasks and fruitful days,
And heavy clods well broken by his plough ?
What does it profit that he ne'er took harm
From glutton banquets and luxurious wine ?
He fared on leaves and grassy delicacies
By art unspoiled; his cups were bubbling springs
And rivers swift of flow; no lurking care
E'er troubled or destroyed his wholesome sleep.

During that single year of plague, they say,
All the kine failed for Juno's offering
In that fair land, and to her lofty shrines
Came chariots drawn by elks in ill-matched pairs.
The people broke the soil with rakes, or dug
With hands and nails to plant the needed corn,
And o'er steep hills dragged up the creaking wain
Straining their own necks to the heavy load.
No wolf that year did thievishly explore
The precincts of the fold, nor haunt by night
Where the flock lies; a darker form of fear
Had made him harmless. Even timid does
And swift-foot stags now wandered without heed
Among the dogs and close to cottage doors.
Now even the offspring of the boundless sea

Each breed of things that swim, the rolling waves
Cast forth upon the ocean's sandy bound
Like shipwrecked dead; and unto haunts unknown
Up flowing rivers drove great troops of seals.
Defenceless in his labyrinthine den
The viper died, and water-serpents foul,
Their scales with terror bristling. Even the air
Befriends the birds no more, but down they fall
Leaving in some far cloud their vital breath.

This sickness did not yield to change of food.
The leeches' arts brought bane, and those most skilled
Despaired and fled, — e'en Chiron, Saturn's son,
And sage Melampus, Amythaon's heir.
For now in wrath, from Stygian gloom sent forth,
Arose pale-browed Tisiphone who drove
A troop of plagues and sickening alarms
Before her as she moved, and day by day
Upreared to vaster height her hungry head.
With bleatings of the sheep and bellowing cries
The parching river banks and helpless hills
Re-echoed loud. Her slaughter now she poured
On multitudes together, and heaped up
In stall and barn the sickly carcasses,
That fell in foul decay, till wisdom learned
To bury deep and to great pits consign.
For no hides could be used; the inward parts
No streams could cleanse nor any flame make pure.
Nor could the fleece, plague-bitten and unclean
Be shorn, for none upon the filthy wool
Could lay a hand. If any one dared try

To wear th' infected garb, he straight was seized
With burning rashes and his limbs exhaled
An evil-smelling dew. But not for long
He lingered in his pain: the fiery curse,
Spread fast and all the tainted frame consumed.

GEORGIC IV

Of honey, wind-bred bounty of the sky,
Next let me sing. And to the humble task
Once more, Maecenas, lend a gracious ear!
A pageant wonderful to thee I show,
The story of a people light as air,
Their large-souled leaders, and of all their kind
The customs, occupations, kingdoms, wars.
A task of narrow span, but no small praise,
If unpropitious powers bar not my way,
And favoring Phoebus grant a poet's prayer.

First find the bees safe shelter and abode
Where no winds enter, such as backward blow
The honey-bearers from their homeward way;
And where no sheep, no kids with frolic horn,
Trample upon the flowers, nor roving calf
Swish through the dewy grass and tread it down.
Let not the scale-backed, painted lizard peer
Too nigh the bees' full barns, nor thievish birds,
Fly-catchers, or the swallow whose soft breast
By her own murderous hands was dabbled o'er.
For such make forage far and wide and bear
In ruthless beak the insect harvesters
As sweet, winged morsels to their nestlings wild.
But flowing fountains near the hives should be,
Still pools with fresh, green mosses bordered round,

And through the grasses a small rill should run.
Above their portals let a branching palm
Or large wild olive its deep shadows throw,
That when new-chosen chiefs lead forth in Spring
The young swarm, and escaping from their cells
The playful legion greets its native air,
Then the cool bank may lure them to repose
From the hot sun-beam, and the neighboring tree
Its leafy hospitality extend.

In the mid-stream, though slow or swift it run,
Set willow boughs or large, smooth stepping-stones,
To serve for bridges where th' alighting bee
May dry his spread wings in the summer sun,
If, ere he heeded, some impetuous breeze
Have drenched or wrecked him in that little sea.
Around the place let verdant cassias grow,
With much strong-scented thyme, and let the stream
Flow through sweet beds of thirsting violets.
The hives themselves, if stitched of hollow bark
Or plaited basket-work, should have but doors
Of narrow compass, lest in winter's chill
The honey thicken, or in sultry days
Melt and ooze off: for bees make anxious toil
'Gainst either trouble; with no aimless care
They eagerly seal up all crevices,
All air-holes in their walls, filling the cracks
With flowery pollen; they collect and save
Their thick glue for this work, which faster binds
Than bird-lime or the pitch of Phrygian pines.
Often they build a secret hearth and home

By burrowing in the earth, I hear men say;
And hid in hollowed crags their nests are found,
Or deep in cavernous bole of fallen tree.
Thou likewise o'er the bee-hives' crannied sides
Wilt smear warm clay, patting it down, and then
Strew leaves on top. But let no yew-tree grow
Where the bees haunt, nor burn red crabs near by,
Nor let there be deep mud-holes or the stench
Of filthy slough; nor let o'erarching rocks
Be rife with echoes doubling every cry.

Now further counsel. When the golden sun
Bids the defeated winter sink away
Under the earth, and quite unbars the sky
To summer's burning glory, then the bees
Roam over glade and grove, harvesting well
The gorgeous flowers, and sip on lightsome wing
The surface of the streams. From this time forth
They fondly tend, with sweet, mysterious joy,
The young brood in the nests, and skilfully
Sculpture the wax and mould the honey-comb.

At the same season, when the caravan
Pours from the hives and skyward, starward, soars
Along the glowing air, your eyes behold
With wonder how the wind will gather them
In one dark cloud. Then watch them where they move!
For always flowing springs and sheltering trees
They seek for: then take heavy-scented herbs
Bruised balsam and the wax-flower's humble weed,
And sprinkle with their juice some chosen spot
And clash loud cymbals like a Corybant.

At this balm-breathing place the swarm will stay
And rear, as is their wont, the future brood.

But sometimes they declare a war: for oft
Between two kings a fatal strife begins
Tumultuous, and one discerns from far
The anger of the mob, whose hearts leap up
All fury for the fight. A loud alarm
Like hoarse-tongued blare of martial brass
Rebukes the lingerers. A wild cry is heard
In semblance of the trumpet's billowy sound.
Then comes the raging charge: their little wings
Glitter, their stings are sharp as javelins.
They grapple limb with limb, and round each chief,
Each king's pavilion, there is tug of war,
As with fierce war-cry each defies the foe.
In such wise, when some rainless day in Spring
Invites them to the open fields, they burst
Impetuous from their portals, and the bees
Join battle high in air; a mighty din
Arises; they roll up confusedly
In one great globe, then drop they headlong down;
Not thicker is the fall of wind-blown hail
Nor shower of acorns from storm-shaken tree.
The chieftains in the midmost war are known
By their far-shining wings and show abroad
How vast a valor such small breasts contain;
So stubbornly they hold their ground, until
The mightier victor of this host or that
Compels to panic flight his routed foe.
Yet all this stir of passion and fierce fight,

If but a little dust be tossed in air,
Will be subdued, dispersed, and die away.

But when the two chief captains homeward come
From conduct of the war, the vanquished one
Must be condemned to die, lest he should waste
The public substance. Let the victor take
An undisputed throne. One now shines forth
In golden flecked attire; of race diverse
The twain appear, one strong and flourishing,
Of haughty looks and bright with crimson scales,
The other in foul garb inglorious
Drags slothfully his swollen bulk along.
And like their kings their followers also prove
Of differing kind: some foul and colorless
As dust-cloud on a highway, such as chokes
The thirsty traveller; but the others flash
With glittering beams and wear a glow of fire,
Their backs all blazoned with bright drops of gold.
This is the nobler breed; from these when heaven
Brings the due season round thou shalt obtain
Sweet honey, and not only sweet but clear,—
A mellowing mixture if the wine be strong.

But when the swarm flits aimless through the air
Heeds not its honied treasure, and would soar
Free of the cool hives, in such idle play
Thy art must govern their inconstant mind.
The task is easy. Thou hast but to clip
The leaders' wings; for when these lag below
No common bee will soar aloft, nor dare

Give marching orders to the bivouac.
Then gardens with the breath of saffron flowers
Tempt them to linger, where 'gainst birds and thieves
With willow scythe the god of Hellespont,
Priapus, is a faithful sentinel.
Then the bee-keeper from the lofty hills
Must fetch pine boughs and thyme leaves, scattering
both
All round the hives; and with his own strong hand
Set out fine, healthy plants, and guide the flow
Of friendly streams to bless his garden ground.

But truly, if I were not reefing sail
Nor ending now a long, laborious voyage,
And were I less in haste to beach my keel,
Perchance I could make venture of a song
On gardens and the skill to make them bloom:—
How Paestum's roses twice a year unfold,
How endives flourish in a trickling rill,
Parsley at brookside green, and rambling gourds
Thrust forth their rounded bellies through the grass.
Then would I of that tardy loiterer tell,
Narcissus, of th' acanthus' nodding stem,
Of ivies pale, and pathways bordered green
With myrtle.

For beneath Oebalia's towers
Where dark Galaesus flows through golden corn,
I once made friendship of an aged man
From Corycus, who had a few poor roods
Of worthless land. No pasturage was there
For cattle nor for flocks convenient food,

Nor soil for vines. Yet he among its thorns
Raised his small plot of greens and round them sowed
A few white lilies, vervain's sacred leaf,
With poppies of rare savor, while his soul
Vied with the wealth of kings, when late at eve
He heaped th' unpurchased banquet on his board.
The rose of Spring and autumn's apples red
He was the first to pluck. When winter's chill
Still split the rocks with frost and laid cold curb
Upon the frozen stream, already he
Was toying with some soft-tressed hyacinth,
Chiding slow summer and the laggard Spring.
He was, be sure, the first whose brooding bees
Were in full swarm; his fingers earliest
Pressed forth the bubbling honey from the comb.
Lime-trees he planted and luxuriant pines,
And what his fruit trees in the blossoming Spring
Of promise bore, not less rich autumn gave.
His elm-tree saplings even when full-grown
He could transplant, or pear-trees big and strong,
Or the young plane-tree when its spreading boughs
Screened from the sun the guest that drank his wine.
Yet all these joys I lack full space to sing.
Let later singers the sweet story tell.

Come then, give ear, while I those gifts declare
Which bees received of Jove, when for such boon
They, following where the clash of cymbals called
And that wild chant the Cretan priesthood sang,
In Dicte's cave fed heaven's infant king.
They are the only creatures to possess

Offspring in common, and their city build
Of undivided houses, where they live
Obeying mighty laws, and they alone
True fatherland and fixed abodes obtain.
Warned of approaching winter, they employ
Their summer's day in toil, and store their gains
As common treasure. Certain chosen ones
Forage for food and, so it is agreed,
Keep busy in the fields while others pent
Within the walls of houses, firmly mould
The bottom of the comb; for which they use
Narcissus' tear and gums from bark of trees,
Then roof with clinging wax. Others lead forth
Their infant brood in air, the tribe to be.
Still others closely pack the honey-dew,
Till every cell with nectared sweet runs o'er.
For others 'tis th' apportioned task to stand
Gate-sentinels, and keep alternate watch
For auguries of rain and cloudy skies.
These at the gates receive the little loads
Of the home-comers, or lined up for war,
Fight the dull drones and bar them from the hive.
Eager the toil and swift. The honey-comb
Breathes to the air sweet fragrance of wild thyme.

It minds me of the Cyclops' wondrous task,
When from the molten mass of yielding ore
They forge their thunderbolts: a certain part
Force bull's-hide bellows to puff back and forth
The windy blasts; part temper in deep pool
The hissing metal; with their anvil's weight

The floor of Aetna groans; their lifted arms
With power gigantic strike the measured blows,
And with huge pincers gripping on the steel
They roll it round. With not less furious toil,
If such small creatures may with large compare,
The bees upon Hymettus' hill divine
Rush to their labors, mightily compelled
By inborn love of riches, each pursuing
His separate task and gain. The oldest ones
Take counsel for their city, raising walls
About the honied treasure, or build up
Ingenious dwellings; but the younger sort
Come late at eve and weary, bringing home
Thigh-loads of flowery food. They travel far
Feeding on arbute or the silvery bloom
Of willows, or on blushing crocuses,
Or fruitful limes and deep-dyed hyacinth.
But all together seek repose or toil
At the same hours. When morning's ray appears
They hurry from the gates, not one delays.
But when the star of twilight lifts in heaven
Its monitory beam, all homeward fly,
Quitting the forage of the plain, to find
Safe shelter and to ease their wearied limbs.
Loud is the air when the returning swarm
Hums round the hive; but later, when they lie
Each in his chamber, then the silence falls
And shadows of the night, while welcome sleep
Possesses all. But if the opening morn
Show dark and rainy skies, they fly not far
From house and home, nor venture high in air

If tempests threaten, but in safety rove
Close to their city walls, and seek supply
Of water, taking but a brief detour.
Sometimes they lift small pebbles, as light boats
Bear ballast through the waves; and weighted so,
They keep their balanced flight through stormful air.

But veriest marvel of the ways of bees
Is that their limbs mix not in love's embrace
Nor weaken them by lust, nor ever bear
Their young in pangs of travail; but from leaves
Of fragrant herbs the mothers with their lips
Breathe in their offspring, and all virginal
Give birth to kings and tiny citizens,
Repeopling so their waxen state and throne.
Often they wound on flinty rocks their wings
And faithful to their burdens bravely die.
Such zeal they have for flowers, and in their life
Of honey-gathering such sweet glory find.

Thus though each single life has narrow bound,
But seven summers, no more, the race of bees
Lives on immortally. Age after age
Their noble line is blest and counts its roll
Of a long multitude of sires of sires.
But to their kings the fealty they pay
Not Egypt nor the Lydian monarchy
Surpass, not Parthia nor the golden Mede
Beside Hydaspes' wave. For when their king
Securely stands, a common thought and soul
Fills all the host; but if the chieftain fall

All loyal bonds are snapt, and their own rage
Tears down the toil-built honey and destroys
The waxen treasure-house. The king defends
Their work, their wealth; while they his state surround
With honor and applause, and at his side
Attend him in loud-shouting, loyal throng.
They lift him on their shoulders; or in war
Fling their own bodies in his foeman's way,
Seeking by many a wound a glorious death.

These acts and powers observing, some declare
That bees have portion in the mind of God
And life from heaven derive; that God pervades
All lands, the ocean's plain, th' abyss of heaven,
And that from him flocks, cattle, princely men,
All breeds of creatures wild, receive at birth
Each his frail, vital breath; that whence they came
All turn again, dissolving; so that death
Is nowhere found, but vital essences
Upsoaring in the vast, o'er-vaulted sky
Move unextinguished through the starry throng.

If e'er thou wouldest from its small shelf unseal
The honied store, first having purified
Thy lips and breath, with water sprinkle well
And waft the wreathing smoke with wave of hand.
Twice in the year the teeming brood is born,
Two harvests have they: when the Pleiad star
Spurns with her wingèd feet the ocean's rim,
And when in flight before the stormful sign
Of the great Fish, on journey dark and drear

She sinks from heaven beneath the wintry wave.
This is the season when the wrath of bees
Breaks bound, and if one harm them, they infuse
A venom in each sting and in thy veins
Implant a hidden barb, leaving behind
Their own lives in the little wounds they give.
If a hard winter bodes, and thy fond care
Forecasts their future, pitying what would be
Thy spirit-broken swarm's distressful state,
Fear not to smoke them out with odorous thyme
And cut the empty combs. Haply some newt
Has bored the wax unseen, or in the cells
The sunbeam-fearing beetles throng, or they
Who sit at unearned feasts, the shirking drones.
Or some rude hornet with his mightier sting
Has forced his way, or moth of dreadful breed,
Or spider, by Minerva curst, has hung
Her swinging webs at entrance of the hives.
The more the bees feel poverty, the more
They turn to eager labors and retrieve
A fallen people's fortune, heaping high
Their crowded marts and flowery granaries.

But if it chance, because the life of bees
Has the same ills as ours, that their small frames
Languish in pestilence, these certain signs
Will tell thee of their plight: the stricken ones
Keep changing color and their visages
Are hideously wasted; then the tribe
Bears slowly from its house the lifeless forms
With mournful pomp of death; or clinging close

With interwoven feet they swing aloft
Above their threshold, or with portals barred
Linger within the walls, all spiritless
With hunger and benumbed with shrivelling cold.
Then sounds a deeper voice, a booming note
Ever increasing, as when north winds roar
In wintry woods, or when a roughened sea
Flows moaning from the shore, or when swift fires
Leap, loud and strong behind shut furnace doors.
Burn at such time the sweet-breathed galbanum.
Carry them honey poured in pipes of reed
Tempting them thus to feed and calling them
To the familiar feast. 'Tis also well
To flavor it with sap of powdered galls
And rose-leaves dried, or freshly trodden must
Warmed at a fire, or raisin-clusters plucked
From some choice vineyard; also leaves of thyme,
The Attic sort, and that strong-scented stem
The Centaurs knew. Then there's a useful flower
Growing in meadows, which the country folk
Call star-wort, not a blossom hard to find,
For its large cluster lifts itself in air
Out of one root; its central orb is gold
But it wears petals in a numerous ring
Of glossy purplish blue; 'tis often laid
In twisted garlands at some holy shrine.
Bitter its taste; the shepherds gather it
In valley-pastures where the winding streams
Of Mella flow. The roots of this steeped well
In hot, high-flavored wine, thou may'st set down
At the hive door in baskets heaping full.

But if thy whole swarm at a stroke should fail
With no stock left for breeding, let my song
Tell now a memorable art derived
From an Arcadian king, and show what way
When bulls are slaughtered oftentimes their blood
Out of corruption generates the bee. . .
From ancient lore I will the tale unfold.
For where Canopus' favored citizens
Beneath the Macedonian's golden sway
By the full, lingering waters of the Nile,
Sail o'er their farms in painted skiffs (though oft
The Persian bowmen vex the borderland)
And where in seven floods the rushing stream
Divides, and feeds the green Egyptian field
With that rich earth the river downward draws
From where the dark-skinned Aethiopians roam —
Throughout that famous land their opulent ease
Depends upon this art.

First they choose out
Some place of narrow bounds, and roofing o'er
With tiles, building around it straitened walls,
They cut four windows open to four winds,
But not square to the sun. Then from the herd
They take a steer, a two-year-old, whose horns
Just curl upon his brows; his nostrils twain
And breathing mouth, though stoutly he resist,
They seal fast; then with rain of many blows
They beat his life out, crushing every part
Except th' unbroken hide. The body then
Is laid in the enclosure; under it
They scatter boughs, the fragrant leaves of thyme

And cassia freshly pulled. This must be done
When first the Spring winds set the waters free,
Before the meadows blush with early flowers
Or ere the chattering swallow hangs her nest
Under the roof-tree beam. Soon waxing warm
The moisture rises in the softened bones,
And living creatures, wonderful to see,
Come forth, at first all footless, but ere long
With whir of wings the restless multitude
In swelling numbers on the liquid air,
Bursts swift away; like some full, pouring shower
From summer cloud, or like the arrowy rain
From a loud, quivering bowstring skyward flung,
When Parthia's light-foot host invites the war.

What god, O Muses, labored to devise
This art for us, or how did human skill
Unto such novel venture find a way ?
The shepherd Aristeaus climbing forth
From Tempe's vale and river, having lost,
So runs the tale, his swarms of bees, and vexed
With fever and with famine, stood all tears
Hard by the sacred source of Peneus' wave,
And making loud complaint and bitter cry,
Called thus: " Cyrene, mother mine, whose home
Is deep below this stream, why bor'st thou me
Of famous, heavenly line (if I may claim
Apollo, lord of Thymbra, for my sire,
As thou hast said) yet gav'st me birth
To be of fate the scorn ? Where hast thou flung
Thy love of me away ? Why bid aspire
To heaven and godhead ? Look, my life as man

Has lost its pride and crown, its busy care
Of field and flock, with many a patient proof,
So painfully achieved. And yet thou wert
My mother! Therefore come! Let thine own hand
Spoil and uproot my fruitful orchards fair,
Hurl fire on my folds, my harvest blight,
Burn up my seedlings and with ruthless axe
My vineyards hew away! — if verily
Such scorn thou hast of all that brings me praise.”
Now from her chamber deep below the wave
His mother heard his voice. Her nymphs hard by
Sat in a circle spinning from their looms
Rare fleeces dipped in hues of hyaline:
Ligea, Xantho, with Phyllodoce
And Drymo, o'er whose snowy necks flowed down
Their gleaming hair, Cydippe and gold-tressed
Lycorias, the one a virgin free.
The other to the labors lately come
Of motherhood; there were the sisters twain
Clio and Beroe, ocean's daughters both,
In golden zone and gorgeous mantles clad;
Deiopea, Opis, Ephyre
And fleet-foot Arethusa, who at last
Had laid her arrows by. This sea-nymph throng
Was listening to the tales of Clymene:
Of Vulcan's fruitless caution and the guile
Of amorous Mars that gained him stolen joy;
And of unnumbered loves of gods she told,
Since first the world began. So while their hands
Twirled from the spindles the soft threads of wool,
They heard th' enchanting burden of her song.

But once again upon his mother's ear
Smote Aristaeus' cry, and those sea-nymphs
Listened amazed upon their crystal thrones.
Then Arethusa, ere her sisters spoke,
Uplifting from the wave her golden brow,
Thus called from far: "Cyrene, sister mine,
Hear not in vain that terrifying cry.
Behold thy darling and thy chiefest care,
Unhappy Aristaeus, stands in tears
On brink of Peneus' wave, and on thy name
Calls loud to tell thee of thy cruelty."
Once more the mother with unwonted fear
Trembled at heart: "Oh, hither where we dwell
Show him his way," she said, "Grant him the boon
To cross yon threshold of divine abodes."
Straightway she gave command that far and wide
The opening river floods should yield free path
To the young shepherd's feet. And lo! the waves
Rose like a hilltop round him and received
In vast embrace, letting the hero pass
Deep down below the river. Now his eyes
Gazed wondering on his goddess-mother's realm.
He passed through watery kingdoms, by dark lakes
All cavern-girdled, by loud-roaring groves.
Then by the noise of mighty floods struck dumb
He saw vast rivers flowing under earth
Each in its region due. The Phasis there
And Lycus he could see, and that first well
Whence breaks to birth Enipeus' stream profound.
There Father Tiber rose, and Anio's
Swift current, rock-bound, echoing Hypanis,

Caucus, Mysia's stream; there golden-horned,
His countenance a bull, Eridanus
That with more fury than all floods beside
Sweeps through rich farms to meet the purple sea.

Soon came the youth beneath the pendent stone
That roofed his mother's halls. Cyrene saw
Her son's unfruitful tears. Her sisters brought,
In order due, ablution for his hands
And napkins of shorn fringe; they piled the board
With feasting and with wine-cups oft refilled.
The sacred altars blazed with fragrant fires.
The mother cried: "Bring forth a brimming bowl
Of Lydian vintage. We make offering
Unto the ocean's god." Wherewith she prayed
To ocean the great parent, and the nymphs:
A hundred haunt the groves, a hundred guard
The rivers, and they are her sisters all.
Three times on Vesta's burning hearth she poured
A stream of wine, three times the vanquished fire
Leaped sparkling to the roof-tree in fresh flame.
The happy omen cheered her fearful mind
And thus she spoke:

"In far Carpathian main
The sea-green Proteus dwells, a prophet-bard.
Whose dolphin chariot skims the mighty deep
With yoke of two-foot horses. At this hour
Back to his own Emathian shores he hies,
His fatherland Pallene. We sea-nymphs
And gray-beard Nereus greatly worship him.
For he, prophetic soul, has vision clear

Of all that is and was and soon will be.
The power is Neptune's gift, at whose command
He, under rolling tides, the shepherd is
Of monster flocks and of foul-featured seals.
'Tis he, my son, whom thou must bind with cords
Then will he show what brought thy plagues to pass
And grant escape. No precept will he give
Save on compulsion; thou canst not persuade
By prayers. Take him by violence and bind
Strong fetters round his limbs, until at last
Thou shalt dissolve his vain, deceiving spells.
Myself at noon's full blaze, when all the fields
Are thirsting and the flocks in shadows lie,
Will lead thee where this aged prophet hides
When weary of the sea. Thou, while he sleeps,
Seize on him with firm hand and fetters strong.
His changeful shapes will mock thee; he will wear
The forms of many a beast: he will appear
A bristling boar, a tiger grim, a snake
Of scaly coils, a red-necked lioness;
Or he will seem a sound of crackling fire
And through thy fetters leap, or suddenly
Drop like fast-flowing water from thy grasp.
But thou the more he shifts, the more he flies
From form to form, bind thou the cords, my son,
Yet tighter, till at last thine eyes behold
The self-same shape his changeful body wore
When with closed eyes he first lay down and slept."
She spoke: and round her breathed the fragrant air
Of her immortal nature, which did flow
Over her son's whole body, from his head

His ordered tresses shed an effluence
Divinely sweet, and through his manly limbs
New vigor flowed.

A cavern vast

Lies in a certain mountain's hollowed side,
Where driven by the winds the swollen waves
Draw back divided, and where many a time
The storm-caught mariners safe shelter find.
Deep in its gloom behind a barrier stone
Lay Proteus. There the sea-nymph set her son
In shadowy ambush far from light of day,
But she herself, all mantled in a cloud,
Watched at a distance. 'Twas the season when
The fierce Dog Star that burns the fevered Ind
Flamed in the sky, and half the orb of heaven
The fiery sun had passed. The pastures green
Were withered, the dry-throated rivers ran
Emptied, and their warm beds of oozy clay
Lay parching in the sunshine. Proteus then
Out of the billowy seas had sought repose
Within his wonted cavern. Round him ranged
The watery tribes that habit the great sea,
In frolic shaking off the bitter brine
Like showers of dew; far-scattered on the shore
Were stretched the sleeping seals. The god himself
Seemed like the herdsman in the hills, what time
The evening star leads back from field to fold
His cattle and his flock; his bleating lambs
Tempt the far-listening wolves — he takes his place
On some tall stone and counts them as they pass.

Now Aristaeus, his occasion come,
Soon as the old man's weary limbs took rest,
Rushed in upon him with a mighty cry
And bound him as he lay. The struggling god
Forgot not his own arts, and changed himself
Into all wondrous things: to flames of fire,
To frightful monsters and swift-passing streams.
But when for all his guile he could not flee,
Yielding, he took his own true shape, and spake
From human lips this answer: "At whose word,
Com'st thou my dwelling nigh, presumptuous boy ?
What wouldest thou have ?" The other answered him:
"Thou knowest, Proteus, knowest all untold.
What scapes thy knowledge ? Prithee now give o'er!
By word divine I come, and ask of thee
Some oracle to help my desperate need."

He ceased. At last the prophet overborne
By much constraint, rolled wide his blazing eyes
And glances dark, gnashed terribly his teeth
And from his lips the words of fate set free.
"None less than wrathful god pursues thee thus.
For dire offences is thy suffering paid.
'Tis Orpheus, woe-begone, but guiltless all,
Sends thee his vengeance until fate oppose;
For mighty is his anger evermore
Robbed of his wife. It was thy chase she fled
Swift through the stream, but saw not in her path
The huge snake hiding on the deep-grassed shore,—
Doomed girl! The forest-nymphs, her lovely peers,
To the high hilltops sent their wailing cry;

The peaks of Rhodope lamented loud,
Lofty Pangaea, and the land of Thrace
Beloved of Mars; swift Hebrus flowed in tears
And Orithya wept. But he, the bard
Soothed his love-anguish on the concave shell,
Singing of thee, sweet wife, and wandering lone
Upon a desolate shore. Of thee he sang
When morning rose and with departing day.
He entered also at the doors of hell,
At Pluto's vast abode, that clouded grove
Black with eternal horror. He drew near
Those fleshless ghosts and Hades' grisly king,
Whose hearts at human prayers no motion feel.
Yet at his song, from deepest Erebus
The lifeless phantoms and thin shadows came,
Loving and pitiful; like flocks they seemed
Of birds that hide in leafy boughs, when night
Or wintry tempest drives them from the hills.
Mothers and husbands came, with lifeless forms
Of high-souled heroes, boys, unwedded maids,
And youthful manhood given to the tomb
Before fond parents' eyes. Around them flowed
Cocytus, dark with slime and loathly weed.
An odious fen is there, a dull, dark pool,
And Styx, nine times infolded hemmed them round.
Yet even the inmost house of death and hell
Listened in wonder, and th' Eumenides
With serpent-wreathed hair. Fell Cerberus
Held his three mouths agape. The windy wheel
That tortures lost Ixion ceased to roll.

Now homeward turning, Orpheus had escaped
These perils manifold; Eurydice,
His own once more, was climbing back to life,
But following far behind her spouse, for so
Proserpina had said. But, ere he knew,
A sudden madness seized the lover's mind —
A fault to be forgiven, could hell forgive.
For when the first clear sunbeam smote her brow,
He, heedless, ah! and his resolves undone,
Paused, looking backward on Eurydice.
Then all his work was nothing, for the law
Of death's grim king was broken. Then three times
Loud thunders o'er Avernus' waters rolled.

'Orpheus,' she cried, 'what madness this, that slays
My wretched self and thee? Oh, once again
They call me back, the unrelenting powers.
Sleep falls upon my fading sight. Farewell!
Deep night is round me and I drift away,
No longer thine, alas! but lifting thee
My helpless hands.'

She spake and suddenly

Sank from his sight, like cloudy smoke that fades
And flies away mingling with viewless air.
He stood, a shadow grasping, and would fain
Speak to her o'er and o'er; but after this
She saw him not. The Stygian boatman gave
No second passage o'er his barrier stream.

What could he more attempt, or whither flee,
Of such a bride twice robbed? What bitter cry

Can reach the realm of death, or mournful voice
Move the infernal powers ? What was she now
But shadow cold, on Stygian shallop borne ?
So he, while seven whole months went by, they say,
Beneath the windy crags and by the shores
Of solitary Strymon weeping strayed,
To caverns cold his sorrows numbering o'er
In music that made tigers tame and lured
The rugged oaks to follow.

Even so

In poplar shades the mournful nightingale
Her stolen brood bewails, which cruel hands
Have found, and pulled all naked from her nest.
The livelong night she cries, and on one bough
Renews the doleful story, far and wide
Filling the forest with complaint and woe.

His heart could love no more; no spousals new
His purpose changed. In solitude he roved
Far north through frozen fields and Scythian snows,
O'er mountain steeps that wear perpetual cold,
Lamenting loud his lost Eurydice
And Pluto's favors vain. His faithful grief
Angered those Thracian maids whose kiss he scorned,
As madly through Cithaeron's echoing vales
Their bacchanalian, midnight revel sped.
When they had torn the lover limb from limb
And hurled him piecemeal o'er the fields, even then
As Hebrus' rolling current swept along
His head, from white neck rent away, its voice,
Its death-cold tongue, cried forth 'Eurydice!'

The parting breath sighed ‘Poor Eurydice!’
‘Eurydice!’ the sounding shores replied.”

Thus Proteus’ tale had end; and with a leap
He plunged him in the sea and where he plunged
Tossed up the wave-crest into whirling foam.
Not so Cyrene, she before he asked,
Unto her trembling son this counsel gave:
“ Now may thy heart, dear son, put by its pain.
The plague had this one cause: it was the nymphs
With whom in lofty groves she tripped along,
That sent thy swarms of bees such hapless end.
Go offer gifts. Uplift the suppliant hand
And pray the gentle wood-nymphs to forgive.
Soon will they pardon and thine offering heed,
Letting their anger die. But in what form
To make petition, I will first unroll.
Four noble bulls surpassing large and strong
Who now are pastured on the uplands green
Of this Lycaean hill, these shalt thou choose;
And with them take as many heifers fair
Whose necks no yoke has touched. Build then
Four altars at the wood-nymphs’ favored shrine
And let the sacred streams of blood run down
From throats of victims slain; but leave behind
Their lifeless bodies in the leafy grove.
When after these things the ninth morn is come,
Pay funeral sacrifice in Orpheus’ name
And with oblivion’s poppies garland o’er,
Slaying a black-fleeced sheep. Then to the grove
Return, and to th’ appeased Eurydice
Make thankful offering of a heifer slain.”

No tarrying now! But straightway he fulfilled
His mother's words. He sought the favored shrine
And raised the wood-nymphs the four altars due.
Four noble bulls surpassing large and strong,
Four unyoked heifers brought he; afterward
When the ninth morn had risen, then he paid
The sacrifice to Orpheus, and retraced
His footsteps to the grove. There suddenly
Men saw a wonder passing strange: the sides
Of the slain cattle, now turned soft, buzzed loud
With swarming bees; the belly and the ribs
Were teeming; and the bees in formless clouds
Streamed upward to a tree-top, and hung down
In pointed cluster from the swinging bough.

Thus have I made my songs of well-kept farms,
Of flocks withal and trees, while Caesar's power
Was launching the vast thunder of his war
Over the deep Euphrates, publishing
By conquest his supreme and just decrees
Unto the grateful nations, taking so
His pathway to the gods. The selfsame days
I, Virgil, passed in sweet Parthenope,
Busied and blest in unrenowned repose,
I that erewhile, when youthful blood was bold
Played with the shepherd's muse, and made my song
Of Tityrus beneath the beech-tree's shade.



THE ECLOGUES

ECLOGUE I

MELIBOEUS, TITYRUS

- M. In the wide-branching beech-trees' shade reclined
Thou, Tityrus, playst on thy slender reed
A shepherd song. I from my fatherland,
My fatherland and pastures ever dear,
To exile fly, while Tityrus at ease
In cooling shadows bids the woodland sing
Of lovely Amaryllis.
- T. 'Twas a god,
O Meliboeus, gave these idle hours,
One of my gods forever. A young lamb,
From my full folds a thankful offering,
Shall oft his altar stain. For it was he
Gave yonder herds their leave to roam so far,
And me to play whatever song I will
On sylvan pipes the happy, livelong day.
- M. I feel no envy, yet my wonder wakes;
For in this region, lo, from end to end
There's trouble stirring. See me sick at heart
Prodding my she-goats on. Look Tityrus,
This one I scarce can move. A few hours gone,
Nigh yonder hazel coppices, she dropped
Two kids, the promise of my flock, and then
Having borne, left them on the stony ground.
Oh! more than once,—but my poor wits were blind—
The heaven-blasted oak this loss foretold,

- ✓ And boding raven shrieked from hollow tree.
✓ But, Tityrus, who is this god of thine ?
T. That city, Meliboeus, men call Rome
I, silly shepherd, pictured should appear
Like yonder little walls and towers, whereto
We drive so oft our tender weanlings down.
For pups are like the bitch, and kids, I knew,
Are moulded like their dam; so what is small
I would with large compare. But of a truth
That city lifts above all else her crown
Far as the cypress o'er the hedge-row thorn.
- M. What urgent errand gave thee sight of Rome ?
T. My freedom. For a late-won freedom smiled
On slack and slothful me, though in that year
I saw my clipped-off beard fall silver gray.
Yet smile she did, and my long hopes fulfilled,
When Amaryllis reigned and I was quit
Of Galatea. For I now confess
That Galatea's lover had no dream
Of freedom, nor a thought for thrift and gain.
Although sleek cattle of my folds were sold
For sacrifice, and from my presses cheese,
Cheese of the best, went to the thankless town,
Still I came always empty-handed home.
- M. Oft would I wonder on what powers divine
Fair Amaryllis so forlornly called,
And for what lover her ripe apples hung
Ungathered on the tree. Our Tityrus
Was far away, and yonder groves of pine,
The flowing fountains and the orchards green
Sighed after Tityrus.

T.

What else to do ?

No laws were here to loose my servile chain,
Nor save in Rome could favoring gods be found.
There, Meliboeus, there these eyes beheld
His youthful brow for whom with annual prayer
Twelve days my altars send their smoke to heaven.
For thus his mildness to my lowly plea
Made answer: "Shepherds, as in days of old,
Go feed your flock and breed the herd unharmed."

- M. Happy old man, thy lands are still thine own
Enough for all thy need. Though still I see
Hillsides washed bare, and fertile pasture land
Run to rank swamp and reeds, yet strange new grass
Tempt not thy teeming ewes, nor will they breathe
From some near-feeding flock the fatal plague.
Happy old man! by these familiar streams,
These haunted springs, enjoy thy cooling shade!
Here as of old thy neighbor's hedge-row line,
Where Hybla's bees o'er flowering willows rove,
Shall with a light-voiced whisper woo thy sleep.
On yonder rocky slope with far-flung song
Thy bondman trims the vine; wood-pigeons wild
Thy darlings, ne'er shall silence their dull cry,
Nor from the wind-swept elms the doves their moan.
- T. The light-limbed stag shall pasture in the skies,
The seas run dry and every fish lie bare;
Exchanging lands the Parthian shall drink
Of Aar, Germans of Tigris, ere this heart
Shall lose the vision of that sovereign brow.
- M. Yet must we homeless ones arise and fly
To parching Afric or the Scythian cold,

To Crete and swift Oaxes' tumbling stream,
Or Britain's people sundered from the world.
Oh! shall I ever after seasons gone
See my own country more, my cabin rude
With high-peaked roof of turf ? Or if I see
Hereafter realms once mine, must I be shocked
At scanty blades of corn ? And will there be
Some godless soldier on my well-tilled farm,
Some grim barbarian, gathering its yield ?
Oh, to what woes has civil discord led
Our wretched countrymen ! For whom to reap
Were these fair acres sown ? What profit now
My grafted pear-trees and my trellised vine ?
Move on, dear flock, whose happy days are done !
My mother-goats, move on ! No more shall I
Reclined in cool, green cave behold from far
How on the bush-grown crag you cling and climb.
No shepherd-songs for me ! I shall not lead
My feeding mother-goats to get their fill
Of clover-buds or willow's bitter stem.

- T. Yet enter here and take tonight thy rest,
Sound-sleeping on my pallet of fresh green.
Ripe chestnuts are within, full mellowed fruits
And curds in plenty. Look ! The smoke ascends
From each thatched roof-top in the lowland vale,
And widening shadows from the mountains fall.

ECLOGUE II

ALEXIS

The shepherd Corydon with ardent sigh
Sued fair Alexis, favorite of his lord,
But ne'er his hopes obtained. He could but roam
Day after day where many beech trees wave
Their shadowing crests, and lonely and forlorn
There flung abroad on listening hills and groves
His fruitless passion in this random song:

Cruel Alexis, deaf to what I sing,
Hast thou no pity on me? Thou wilt be
My death at last. Now at the noon-tide hour
My flocks take shelter in the cooling shade,
Now the green lizards hide in hedge-row thorn;
For reapers wearied by the sultry sun
Good Thestylis now mixes savory store
Of garlic, thyme and leaves of fragrant rue;
But where I seek my love, the copses dry
Fill all the burning air with insect-songs.

Were it not better to have borne the scorn
Of haughty Amaryllis and the tears
Her anger knew, or met Menalcas' frown,
Though swarthy he, as thou art white and fair?
O lovely youth, trust not the outward show
Too far! White hawthorn fades, when hyacinths
Are woven in dark garlands. Thy proud looks

Despise me, and of my estate and name
Seek not to know — how rich in herds I be,
What flowing milk I get, and how I own
Wide-pastured o'er the slopes of Sicily
A thousand ewes; their sweet, fresh milk is mine
In parching summer and the wintry cold.
I can sing also: with a song like mine
Loud-voiced Amphion on Boeotia's plain
Gathered his herd from far-off Aracynth.
Nor think me quite uncomely! By the shore
Where the sea lay untroubled by the breeze,
I saw my mirrored shape one day; nor fear,
Even in thine eyes, to rival Daphnis' mould,
If such a glass be true.

Oh, that thy heart
Were willing to abide in lowly thatch
Upon a poor man's simple farm, piercing with shafts
The antlered stag, or driving kids along
With a green mallow wand, while taught of me
Thy wood-notes should repeat the songs of Pan!
For how to knit with wax the numbered reeds
'Twas Pan first showed us, Pan whose faithful care
Is over sheep and shepherd. Scorn not then
To press thy soft lip to a sylvan reed.
Amyntas sued to learn these stops in vain.
My pipe is made of seven jointed stems
Of hemlock! 'Twas Damoetas gave it me;
He whispered as he died, "It now is thine,
"And thou, its second master." So Damoetas.
Stupid Amyntas heard with envious heart.
Then too I have a pair of roe-bucks here,

Once rescued from a perilous ravine,
Still dappled white; they're suckled twice a day;
Freely I offer these, though Thestylis
Begs often she may have them for her own.
And soon she shall, if in thy haughty eyes
My gifts be scorned.

Come hither, loveliest boy!

The wood-nymphs bear thee lilies heaping high
In osier baskets; and a naiad white
Plucking pale violets and poppies tall,
Wreaths, scented fennel with narcissus bloom,
And lavender with all sweet herbs she binds,
And bids sad-vestured hyacinth look gay
Mated with sprays of saffron marigold.
I'll pluck thee apricots of velvet skin,
And chestnuts such as Amaryllis loved,
And waxen plums to top my basket well —
An honored fruit. And O ye laurels green,
Ye myrtles set near by, I cull ye both,
That thus your mingled breaths may sweeter be!

Ah, Corydon, poor clown! Alexis laughs
At gifts of thine; and if by gifts we woo,
Iollas will outvie me. Woe is me!
What curses have I drawn upon this head ?
I bade the northwind o'er my garden blow,
And let the wild boar foul my crystal spring.
Whom dost thou scorn, mad boy! The gods themselves
Have dwelt in woodland shades, and there did roam
Paris, the prince of Troy. Though Pallas bless
The towered citadels herself did build,

Dearer than they to us our woods and wilds.
The bloody lioness a wolf pursues; the wolf, a goat;
The frisking goat runs where fresh clover blooms;
So, O Alexis, Corydon seeks thee.
Its sweetest pleasure leads each creature on.

Ah see! The oxen drag the ploughshare home
Point upward toward the yoke. The setting sun,
Doubles the lengthening shadows. But yet still,
Still in my heart love not less fiercely burns.
What ending has love's day ? Ah, Corydon,
What madness has deluded Corydon ?
O'er yonder elms thy grape-vine runs untrimmed.
Busy thyself with what thy needs require,
Weaving a basket of soft twigs and straw;
And if Alexis frown, turn thou elsewhere!

ECLOGUE III

MENALCAS, DAMOETAS, PALAEMON

- M. Whose is the flock, Damoetas ? Meliboeus' ?
D. No, Aegon's. He has put it in my charge.
M. O luckless flock! For while their owner wooes
Neaera, fearing she may love me best,
This hireling fellow twice an hour milks off
The ewes; the flock is lean; the lambs go dry.
D. A little less abuse of grown men, please!
We know who 'twas when the goats peered around,
And where the covert when the light nymphs laughed.
M. The very day, no doubt, when I was seen
In Micon's garden slashing the young vines
With wicked knife.
D. Or when in beechen grove
Thou brok'st in pieces Daphnis' pipes and bow,
Because to fairer youth thou knewst them given,
And rather wouldest have died than missed that wrong.
M. What can a master do 'gainst such bold thieves ?
Did I not see thee setting traps to snare,
Rascal! that goat of Damon's, while his hound
Barked clamorous and long ? But when I cried,
“ Call the flock home, my Tityrus ! What trick
“ Is that thief playing ? ” thou didst cringe and cower
Down in the sedge.
D. I vanquished him in song.
Should he not pay me what my piping won ?

That goat ? Whate'er you say, the goat was mine.
Damon himself confessed it, but declared
He could not let him go.

- M. Thou vanquish him
In rival song ? When were the waxbound pipes
Ever thine own, thou dabster, who dost play
At common cross-roads to the gaping clowns,
On squeaky fife thy despicable strain ?
- D. Darest thou match me ? Thou and I to prove
Each his own music in responsive song ?
I stake this heifer. Think her no small prize.
She yields milk twice a day and twice gives suck.
I 'll risk her. What's thy stake to strive with me ?
- M. I may not from the flock my wager choose.
At home my father and his niggard wife
Count the sheep twice each day, and he, the goats.
But something better, as thyself wilt own,
Shall be my gage—if this mad match thou darest—
Two cups of beechwood, which with heavenly skill
Alcimedon once carved. About each cup
The cunning tool has shaped a slender vine
With wandering clusters of pale ivy wound,
And in the midst two figures, Conon's one,
And his — who was it ? — that with studious wand
Pictured the vault of heaven for all mankind,
Showing both seed-time and the reaper's star.
My lips have touched them not; they lie in store.
- D. Alcimedon shaped me two cups as well,
The handles looped with soft acanthus leaves.
Lo, Orpheus in the midst holds forth his lyre;
Th' obedient forests follow where he sings.

My lips have touched them not; they lie in store.
But 'gainst my heifer, cups be paltry things..

M. Thou 'lt not escape today! I 'll match with thee
On any terms thou wilt. And for a judge,
Look, here's Palaemon coming! What I do,
Will cool, I think, thy itch for challenging.

D. Come if there's matter in thee; for delay
Is not my habit. There's no living man
I fear to match with. But 'tis serious work.
Neighbor Palaemon, lend us all thine ear!

P. Sing on! How soft this seat of grassy green!
Now meadow-land and orchard break in bloom;
In leaf, the wood; and now the fleeting year
Is at its loveliest. Damoetas, sing!
And thou, Menalcas, answer, and then he!
The Sacred Nine delight in answering songs.

D. From Jove the Muses sprang; the whole wide world
Is full of Jove; he blesses field and farm
And all my music has his favoring care.

M. Me Phoebus loves; and in my garden grow
The gifts by Phoebus chosen, laurels proud,
And blushing hyacinths of sweetest breath.

D. My gamesome Galatea pelteth me
With a red apple; then she hides away
In silvery willows, beckoning where she hides.

M. But sweet Amyntas, passion of my soul,
Runs to my arms unasked. Not Delia's step
Is to my watchful dog oftener known.

D. For my fair girl a gift! I know a place
Where on a lofty bough wood-pigeons breed.

- M. Ten golden apples from a wilding tree
I sent my love; ten more tomorrow go.
- D. How oft-repeated are the whispered vows
My Galatea breathes! O listening winds,
Bear them aloft and make them heard in Heaven!
- M. What profits it, Amyntas, that thy heart
Is not unkind to me, if while thy steps
Chase the swift boar, I tarry tending snares ?
- D. Have Phyllis, Iollas, at my birth-day feast!
When for good crops I sacrifice, come thou!
- M. Beyond all others Phyllis is my own.
She wept, Iollas, when I turned to go,
And sighing said " My handsome lad, farewell! "
- D. Wolves are a shepherd's bane; the heavy showers
Our ripening harvest spoil, and storms the trees;
'Tis angry Amaryllis troubles me.
- M. Sweet to the thirsty corn is falling dew,
Buds to a weanling, willows to its dam;
To me the fair Amyntas, only he.
- D. My simple songs have mighty Pollio's praise.
Feed a fair victim, Muses, for your friend!
- M. Hear Pollio's own high song! Feed yonder bull
With tossing horn and hoof that paws the sand.
- D. Let him who loves thee, Pollio, attain
To honors like thy own! Honey shall flow
For him, and the rough briar yield him fruit.
- M. Who hates not Bavius is doomed to smile
When Maevius sings; then let him also choose
Foxes to draw his plough, he-goats to milk.
- D. Ye lads who stoop for flowers and strawberries,
Beware! a cold snake coils in yonder green.

- M. Run not too far, my flock! Yon river-bank
Caves in. See the wet ram his fleeces shake!
- D. From yon swift stream, my Tityrus, turn back
The feeding she-goats. When the day arrives,
I 'll dip them one and all in some safe spring.
- M. Gather the flock, ye shepherds! lest the heat
Strike to the milk, and we as yester-year
Press the lean udders with a fruitless palm.
- D. Alas, how lank 'mid yon full blooming mead
My bull appears! The self-same plague of love
Drives both the herd and master to one doom.
- M. See my young lambs, how scrawny! No love there!
Whose evil eye has charmed them to their bane?
- D. Say in what land — (and be like Phoebus wise!)
The vault of heaven but three ells wide is spread.
- M. Say in what land the flowers grow scripted o'er
With names of kings — and make my Phyllis thine!
- P. I cannot choose betwixt your rival songs.
Thou earn'st the heifer, he no less, and all
Who either feel love sweet or feel it sour.
Then close the flood-gates, lads! Earth has her fill!

ECLOGUE IV

POLLIO

Sicilian Muses, let the shepherd's rhyme
A loftier theme pursue. Not all delight
In coves green and humble hedge-row flowers.
Yet may this music please our consul's ear!

Now come the world's last days, the age foretold
By Cumae's prophetess in sacred song.
The vast world-process brings a new-born time.
Once more the Virgin comes and Saturn's reign,
Behold a heaven-born offspring earthward hies!
Holy Lucina, lend thy light and aid
The while this child is born before whose power
The iron race of mortals shall away,
And o'er this earth a golden people reign,
For blest Apollo is at last their king.
Under thy fasces, Pollio, forth shall shine
This glory of our age; guided by thee
These potent times begin, which if there be
Some stain still with us of our nation's crime,
Shall blot it out and from perpetual fear
Set the world free. For he of whom I sing
Will have a life divine, and as of old
See kings and heroes with great gods confer,
Himself their counsel sharing, while he rules
Like a good father o'er a warless world.

For tributes at thy birth, O blessed babe,
The un-tilled earth with wandering ivies wild
Shall mingle spikenard, and from bounteous breast
Pour forth her lilies and Egyptian balm;
The flock shall come unguided to the fold
Flowing with milk; nor shall the feeding sheep
At the huge lion tremble; fragrant flowers
Shall from thy cradle spring; the viper's brood
Shall perish, every baneful herb shall fail,
And orient spices by the wayside bloom.

Soon as this child the scriptured story spells
Of glorious heroes and the mighty deeds
His father wrought, soon as his soul shall see
What beauty virtue wears, — in those blest days
The unploughed field shall yellowing harvests show,
Full, purple grapes be plucked of wilding thorn,
And hard-limbed oaks distil sweet honey dew.
Some traces may remain of that old guile,
Which bade men vex with ships the sacred sea,
Or circle towns with stone, or scar earth's breast
With furrows. But another Argo then
Shall carry chosen heroes, at her helm
Another Tiphys sitting; other wars
Shall blaze abroad and once again compel
High-souled Achilles to the Trojan town.
Yet when in after-time the strengthening years
Have made thee man, from kingdoms of the sea
The trader's sail shall cease, nor to and fro
With foreign cargoes ply from shore to shore.
Each land shall all things bear; the patient ground

Shall feel no mattock, nor the vine a knife.
The brawny ploughmen from the laboring yoke
Shall let their bulls go free. No woven wool
Shall flaunt its stolen hues; the ram himself
Shall in the meadows wear the Tyrian stain,
Or change to saffron; and vermillion gay
Shall mantle all unsought the feeding lambs.

“Thus let the ages ever onward roll!”
So sang the Fates, turning their spindles round,
Obedient to the fixed decree of doom.

Receive this glory, for thy day is risen,
Thou child of gods, offspring of mighty Jove!
Look, how the round world with its burden reels,
Its far-spread shores and seas and searchless sky! —
Look, with what joy it hails the time to be!
Oh, may such length of days be granted me,
And skill, as shall suffice thy deeds to tell!
Not then would Thracian Orpheus’ heavenly strains
Nor Linus’ voice outdo me; though to one
His mother gave the song, to one his sire —
The Muse to Orpheus, Phoebus to his son.
Yea, Pan himself, though all Arcadia heard,
Would own Pan vanquished in Arcadia’s ear.

Begin, boy-babe! Give back thy mother’s smile
Who ten long moons her weary sickness bore!
Begin, boy-babe! If parents give no smile,
What god would sup with thee, or goddess wed ?

ECLOGUE V

MENALCAS, MOPSUS

Now that we twain are met, each with some skill,
Thou to give breath to slender reeds and I
To utter verses, why not rest awhile
Where elms and hazels mix their leafy boughs ?

- Mo. The elder thou, Menalcas, 'tis my place
To follow thee, whither with gentle stir
The busy zephyrs fling a trembling shade,
Or to some cavern cool. See yonder cave
Where the wild wood-bine spreads its rambling flower.
- Men. Except Amyntas, on our native hills
Thou hast no rival.
- Mo. And he would make bold
To challenge Phoebus' self in rival song.
- Men. Mopsus, begin! Thy sighs for Phyllis tell,
Or praise for Alcon, or for Codrus scorn.
Begin! Our flocks are Tityrus' care.
- Mo. Nay, let me try the song I lately carved
On a young beech, and tuned the numbers true
With pipe and voice, — these let me sing once more.
And judge thou if I be Amyntas' peer.
- Men. As drooping willows to the silver leaf
Of olive, or some lowly thorn-bush bloom
Beside the red rose, such, if choice were mine,
To thy sweet music is Amyntas' song.

Mo. Cease, shepherd! To the cave our steps have come.

The Song

His doom of cruel death struck Daphnis down;
The wood-nymphs wail; and witness of their tears,
Dark hazel copse and murmuring river mourn.
Clasping in last embrace her son's cold clay,
On all the gods and on the pitiless stars
His mother calls. None drove at such a time
The pastured bulls to where cool waters run;
No stream, O Daphnis, and no tender grass
Touched any four-foot creature's lip that day.
For death of Daphnis Libya's lions fell
Moaned loud, and from the wooded mountain tops
Sad voices flew abroad; for in his car
Armenian tigers Daphnis' bidding knew,
When Bacchus' troop he led to dances gay,
Twining with ivy-leaf his sacred wand.
As vines to trees, to vines the clustering grape,
To herds the bulls, to fields the harvest fair,
Wert thou to all our land the pride and crown.
When fate withdrew thee, Pales from our farms
And Phoebus went away. For where we ploughed
Sowing a goodly seed, forthwith upsprang
Ill-boding darnel and a blighted straw;
For violet sweet and red narcissus bloom,
Thistles and haws thrust forth an angry thorn.
Strew flowers along the turf, ye shepherds all,
And wreath with cypress every fountain's brim.
'Tis Daphnis' due. Oh, build his lofty tomb,
Inscribing o'er the mound this votive song:
My name was Daphnis, dweller in the woods,

Famed through the earth and heaven. My flock
was fair,

But I myself was fairer far than all.

Men. We hear thy voice of song, poet divine,
As when on weary reapers in the grass
A slumber falls, as when in noon-tide blaze
We quench our thirst at a fresh, bubbling spring.
Victor thou art, not only with thy reeds
But master of the song. O shepherd blest,
Now is thy glory second but to his
Of whom thou singest. We with equal praise
Will make thee answering numbers, if we may,
And set thy Daphnis with the sacred stars.
Daphnis our star shall be; he loved us well.

Mo. What other gift to me were half so dear ?
Worthy thy skill is he; and Stimicon
For many a year has spoken of thy song.

Men. In robe of white, with awed and wondering eyes
The threshold of Olympus Daphnis views
And sees beneath his feet the clouds and stars.
The eager forests and encircling plains,
Pan with his shepherds, and the wood-nymphs
fair
In ecstacy rejoice. No wolf intends
To hurt our flock; no guileful snare
Threatens the flying deer; for Daphnis' soul
Was kindly and he wished all creatures peace.
The hill-tops sing and lift their heads unshorn
In gladness to the stars; the rocks and woods
Echo the sacred song: "A god is he,
A god, Menalcas!" Oh, forevermore

Bless and preserve us! For behold I build
Four lofty altars, Daphnis! Two are thine,
And two in Phoebus' praise. Here I will pour
Two bowls of foaming milk his festal day,
Two of the pure oil olive vowed to thee;
But chiefly will I make the banquet gay
With wine unstinted, drinking at the hearth
If chill the skies, but in some grateful shade
If sultry summer shines; from flagons old
I 'll bid my nectared Chian freely flow.
Damoetas and my singing boy from Crete,
Young Aegon, will make music; and our fair
Alphesiboeus trip it in the dance
As laughing satyrs do. Such be the joy
Of thy great holiday: whether in Spring
We offer to the nymphs a votive song
Or move with lustral rite and annual prayer
Through Autumn's whitened field. For while the
boar

Loves lofty hills, or fish the quiet stream,
While crickets taste of dew and bees of thyme,
So long thy name endures and storied praise.
As unto Bacchus' or to Ceres' power,
So unto thine the rustics' solemn vows
Shall be performed, as is thy godhead's due.

Mo. Oh, for such song what guerdon can I give ?
It stirs me to such joy as when I hear
The far-off murmurs of the gathering rain,
Or billow-beaten sands, or when swift streams
Through rock-bound vales and vocal cliffs out-
pour.

- Men. Take first this flute of hemlock; for it told
“ How Corydon for fair Alexis sighed.”
And then “ Be yonder Meliboeus’ sheep ? ”
- Mo. Take thou this crook: which though he asked it oft
Antigenes, then worth a gift of love,
Could ne’er obtain. Menalcas, it is thine.
Its knobs match well; its polished brass how fair!

ECLOGUE VI

VARUS

The first who stooped her to Sicilian song
Nor deemed it shame to dwell in woods and wilds,
Was the divine Thalia. When I fain
Would sing of kings and wars, Apollo twitched
My ear and whispered warning: "Tityrus,
His well-fed sheep best grace the shepherd's trade,
And unpresumptuous song." Therefore this day
(Since, Varus, of thy laurelled name to tell
And lamentable wars, there will be bards
In plenty) let me wake my slender reed
To woo the shepherd's muse. Nor shall I sing
Unhelped of heaven; for whosoe'er shall heed
This verse, O Varus, and its beauty feel,
Shall hear our lowly shrubs and lofty pines
Singing of thee. And naught so pleases Phoebus
As the page, Varus, that sets forth thy name.

Begin, Pierian choir! In cavern green
Chromis and Mnasylos, of youthful bloom,
Found old Silenus in dull slumber laid;
His veins, as was their wont, were swollen large
With last night's wine and revel; from his brows
The flowers were fallen and at distance strewn,
And o'er him by its handle smooth and worn
A heavy flagon hung. On him they fell,

For often had the old man mocked them both
With expectation of a song. So now
They bound him with the garland cords. For aid
Came Aegle, loveliest of the naiad throng,
And o'er his waking brows her finger smeared
Dark dripping mulberries of purple stain.
He laughing at their guile, demanded loud,
“ Why bonds and fetters ? Children, set me free!
Let it content you that for once ye seemed
My masters. Lo, I give the wished-for song.
For you the singing; but the nymph shall win
Payment in other kind.” Straightway his lips
Began enraptured song. Then might be seen
Light-footed fauns and creatures of the wild
All tripping to his measure, and stout oaks
Nodding their top-most boughs. With not less joy
Parnassus stirred when golden Phoebus sang,
Nor less did Rhodope and Ismara
Listen in awe when Orpheus smote the lyre.
He sang how gathered from the vast inane
The seeds of earth, of waters and the winds
Were mixed with flowing fire; how sprung from these
The primal elements began, and shaped
One soft conglomerate ball, the new-born world.
Then the lands hardened, and the sea's confine
Was given for Nereus' dwelling, till earth wore
Diversity of slow-grown shapes; at last
Earth's fields looked up in wonder and beheld
The unfamiliar sunshine, and the rains
That from a loftier welkin now dropped down.
Then mighty forests rose; and things that breathe

Roamed few and fearful o'er the pathless hills.
Then Pyrra's stones were scattered, and the earth
Saw Saturn's reign. He sang Prometheus' woes:
The stolen fire; the vultures on the peak
Of Caucasus; and after these the tale
Of Argo's mariners beside the stream
Calling for Hylas, till the echoing shore
Was loud with "Hylas, Hylas!" all day long.
O happier thou, were no horned creature known,
Pasiphaë! Thy love's a snow-white bull!
O evil-starred, what madness moves thy breast!
King Proteus' daughters by the curse impelled
Lowed frantic through the fields; but never one
Desired such bestial wooing of foul shame,
Though each was fearing that her maiden neck
A yoke must take, and oft would lift her hand
To her smooth brows, to feel a budding horn.
O evil-starred, thou wanderest o'er the hills!
While thy strange love's white side is haply seen
Propped on soft hyacinths; or in the gloom
Of shadowing oak he crops the herbage pale,
Or fiercely follows through the scattered herds
Another mate. "O nymphs of Dicte's hill
Shut all your valley-gates! Perchance these eyes
The hoof-prints of my roving bull may find."
He sang that maid the Hesperian apples gold
Defeated in her race; and how in tears
The sisters of lost Phaëton were bound
By moss and bitter bark and upward grew
Into tall alder trees. The song then told
How Gallus strayed by Heliconian springs

And a muse led him with inviting hand
Up th' Aonian hill, where Phoebus' choir
Rose up in welcome to their lordly guest;
And Linus, shepherd, bard of heavenly song,
His locks with flowers and bitter parsley crowned,
Spoke thus: "The Muses give thee now the reeds;
Behold and take what formerly they gave
The sage of Ascra, who by song on these
Charmed the stout ash-trees from the mountains down.
With these thy music shall retell the tale
Of the Grynean forest's birth, that now
Of all Apollo's groves shall be most blest."
What more? The fame of Scylla, Nisus' child,
Her white thighs girdled by a howling brood
Of monsters, when her anger buffeted
The ships of Ithaca, and, fearful sight!
Her sea-dogs at the trembling sailors tore.
Or Tereus' tale was told: what fearful change
Came o'er his body; the foul banquet spread
By Philomel; what bloody gift she gave,
Then flew swift-pinioned to the wilderness,
But oft returning spread ill-omened wings
And hovered wailing o'er the royal towers.
Yea, every strain his blest Eurotas heard
When Phoebus sang, bidding his laurel trees
Never forget — all these inspired the song
Of old Silenus; these in echoing notes
The music-smitten valleys heavenward flung,
Until too soon th' evening star divine
Bade count our sheep and gather to the fold,
Then moved reluctant through the twilight sky.

ECLOGUE VII

MELIBOEUS, CORYDON, THYRSIS

One day beneath an ilex' tuneful shade
Daphnis had sat him down, and thitherward
Had Corydon and Thyrsis driven their flocks,
Thyrsis his ewes and Corydon his goats
With udders dripping full. The shepherd pair
Were both in flower of youth, Arcadians both,
And well-matched rivals in responsive song.
To that same spot, while I was sheltering
My myrtles from the cold, my chief goat strayed —
The father of the flock; and then I saw
Our Daphnis; and he knew me too and called,
“ O Meliboeus, the he-goat is safe.
Thy kids are here. Come take thine ease with us,
And rest, if free to rest, in this good shade.
Hither across the meads thy bulls will walk
Undriven to the stream; for Mincius here
Has mantled his fair bank with rushes green,
And from the sacred oak murmur the bees.”
What could I do ? Alcippe was not there,
Nor Phyllis, to fetch homeward to the fold
The late-weaned lambs; but oh, a rival song
‘Twixt Corydon and Thyrsis, that were rare!
My toil and task could wait, such sport to see.
So both in rivalry of answering song
Began, with answers prompted by the Muse.
First Corydon, then Thyrsis, each in turn.

Cor. Grant me, O nymphs of Helicon, such song
As to our Codrus, whose enchanting lays
Are like Apollo's own. But if such boon
Be not for all, let my shrill flute be hung
A votive offering on this haunted pine.

Thyr. Arcadian shepherds, let green ivy crown
Your budding poet, till Codrus burst his sides
With envious pain. But if his puff of praise
Flatter too far, then crown your bard to be
With foxglove, to ward off that evil tongue.

Cor. Diana, the boy Micon vows to thee
A bristling boar's-head and the branching horns
Of long-lived stag. If he be fortunate,
He 'll build thy statue of smooth Parian stone,
The Tyrian buskin to thine ankles bound.

Thyr. Priapus, a sweet bowl of milk is thine.
And though thou askest but our sacred loaves,
Thine annual gift, thou guard'st a poor man's trees.
For this one season thou shalt marble be;
But if my flocks breed fast I 'll make thee gold.

Cor. O sea-born Galatea, sweet to me
As thyme on Hybla, whiter than the swan,
Lovelier than ivy pale! when to my barns
The well-fed herds at eve shall homeward move,
If Corydon be near thy heart, come thou!

Thyr. Oh, think me ranker than Sardinian straw,
Rough as a furze-bush, vile as sea-weeds flung

Along the sands, if this one absent day
Travel not slower than a livelong year.
Home with you! Shame! Ye well-fed herds run home!

Cor. O mossy springs and grasses soft as sleep!
O roof of arbute shadows o'er them spread!
Protect my flock at noon-tide! For 'tis now
The summer's fiery star; our vineyards glad
Put forth full-swelling clusters day by day.

Thyr. My hearth is piled with faggots of pitch-pine.
Free burns my faithful fire, and every hour
My walls are black with smoke; we heed no more
The frosts of Boreas than the wild wolf fears
The gathered sheep, or swollen stream its shore.

Cor. Our groves are juniper and chestnuts brown,
The fallen fruit lies under each fair tree,
The whole world smiles; but from these hills and dales
Should beautiful Alexis wander far,
Believe me, not a mountain brook would flow.

Thyr. Our field is burnt up; in the tainted air
All greenness dies, and Bacchus shades no more
The vine-clad slopes; but at the glad return
Of sweetest Phyllis, every bush will bloom
And Jove from heaven drop down the wished-for
showers.

Cor. Hercules loves the poplars, Bacchus vines,
Fair Venus myrtles, and Apollo bays;
Phyllis likes hazels, and while these she likes
Myrtles nor Phoebus' bays shall hazels match.

Thyr. Ash trees suit best the woods, pines garden
ground,
Poplars the brooks, and firs the mountain
heights;
But lovely Lycidas, when thou returnst
Wild ash and garden pine give place to thee.

M. So much is sure: that Thyrsis strove in vain.
Corydon is our bard from this time forth.

ECLOGUE VIII

DAMON, ALPHESIBOEUS

When Damon and Alphesiboeus woo
The muse of shepherds, at the rival song
The herd forgets to pasture, lynxes wild
Stand dumbly wondering, the brooks and streams
Turn back their listening waters and are still.
Let Damon and Alphesiboeus sing!

O thou whose ship in wide Timavus' wave
Toils up the rock-strewn channel, or steers true
From cape to cape along th' Illyrian shore,
Prithee what welcome day shall bid me sing
Thy victories, or praise in every land
Thy verse, than which none fitlier at this hour
Might tread in tragic sock the Attic stage.
My muse with thee was born and ends with thee.
Receive (thy bidding woke them) these, my songs,
And with the conqueror's laurels on thy brows
Let humbler sprays of wandering ivy twine.
When night's cold shade had scarcely fled the sky,
That hour when on the fresh, green grass the dew
Delights our feeding flocks, lo, Damon stood
Propped on his olive crook, and thus complained:

- D. Rise, morning-star, lead forth the blessed day!
But I, betrayed, undone, make mournful tale
Of Nysa my lost mistress' faithless love;

And though yon gods witnessed her oaths in vain
Still now in my last hour on you I call.
Awake, my flute, awake Arcadian song!

The hill of Maenalus has whispering pines
And all its pine trees sing. It hears the loves
Of shepherds and the ancient pipes of Pan,
Who bade the slender reeds not tuneless be.
Awake, my flute, awake Arcadian song!

Nysa in Mopsus' arms! Let love despair!
Let mares with griffins wed, and times to be
Bring timid does and dogs to drink one stream!
O Mopsus cut thee torches! Scatter nuts,
Thou bridegroom! For behold, the evening-star
On Oeta's mountain hails thy wedding night!
Awake, my flute, awake Arcadian song!

'Tis a most fitting match! O scornful girl,
Too proud for shepherds, thou dost quite disdain
My pipe of reeds, my she-goats on the hill,
My shaggy brows and beard that flows too free;
Thou thinkest gods are deaf when lovers pray.
Awake, my flute, awake Arcadian song!

Through our own garden-close I guided thee,
Thee a small maiden at thy mother's side,
In search of dewy apples. My twelfth year
Had scarce begun, yet standing on the ground
I reached and broke the bending boughs for thee.
I saw thee and was lost, blind, mad, a slave!
Awake, my flute, awake Arcadian song!

I know that love-god now. By flinty crags
Of Tmaros or of Thracian Rhodope,
Or of the Afric wilderness he sprung —
A boy inhuman, not our blood or breed!
Awake, my flute, awake Arcadian song!

Unpitying love a mother's hands imbruued
With blood of her own babes. A mother-heart
So hard! Was hers a mother's cruelty,
Or rather was the god implacable?
Implacable the god! the mother too!
Awake, my flute, awake Arcadian song!

Now let wolves run from sheep, let rugged oak
Bear golden apples, let all worthless weeds
Drop amber! Give to owls the voice of swans!
Be Tityrus an Orpheus when he sings,
An Orpheus to the listening woods and hills,
And drive Arion's dolphins o'er the seas!
Awake, my flute, awake Arcadian song!

Oh, let the seas drown all! O woods and hills
Farewell forever! From some far-seen crag,
Some windy mountain-top, I'll hurl me down
To the deep gulf below! And such shall be
My parting gift to Nysa as I die.
Give o'er, my flute! give o'er Arcadian song!

Thus Damon. How Alphesiboeus sang
In answer, tell us, O Pierian maids!
No single singer touches all the chords.

A. Bring water forth, and wreath the altar round
With woolen fillets. Burn me fragrant boughs
And incense rich and strong. Now must I try
My lover's sober senses to control
With arts of magic and enchanting songs.
Bring Daphnis from the city home my song!

Songs of enchantment can draw down the moon
From heaven; Ulysses' crew to brutes were changed
By Circe's spell; and bursting at the sound
The cold-skinned meadow-snake is slain by song.
Bring Daphnis from the city home, my song!

With triple threads of changeful colors three
I wind thee round. Thrice round the altar then
Thy image goes. Odd numbers please the gods.
Bring Daphnis from the city home, my song!

Let Amaryllis weave in triple strand
Three colors, whispering as her fingers wind,
“I, Amaryllis, weave me Venus' chain.”
Bring Daphnis from the city home, my song!

As harder grows the clay and wax melts down,
Touched by the self-same fire, may love of me
Soften my Daphnis' heart and keep him true!
Crumble the wheaten cake! Let torch of pine
These laurel leaves enkindle! Daphnis' power
Sets all my soul on fire; and like this bough
Of burning laurel may my Daphnis burn!
Bring Daphnis from the city home, my song!

May such a love seize Daphnis as consumes
The roving heifer when she seeks her mate
Through copse or lofty forest wandering far,
And wearied flings her in the sedges green
Nigh some full stream, by long desire outworn,
Nor heeds the homeward call of lingering eve.
Such love be his. Nor would I seek his cure.
Bring Daphnis from the city home, my song!

These keepsakes, look! these garments left behind
For pledges of his love! I bury them
Under my door-stone, O deep Earth, in thee,
To pledge me Daphnis in my house will bide.
Bring Daphnis from the city home, my song!

These potent herbs and Pontic poisons rare
I had of Moeris. Pontus grows them best.
And oft would Moeris, tasting them, become
A wolf and prowl the woods, or by their power
Call spirits out of graves, or charm away
A planted crop to fill some stranger's field.
Bring Daphnis from the city home, my song!

Bring embers, Amaryllis, from thy door,
And o'er some flowing river fling them free
Over thy head, but cast no look behind!
With these would I my Daphnis' bosom gain,
Though of all gods and charms quite heedless he.
Bring Daphnis from the city home, my song!

But look! a little tongue of trembling flame
Leaps on the windless altar while I wait.

Heaven help us! What this means I do not know,
But Hylax at the door is barking, ah!
Believe it, can I? Or do lovers still
Feign dreams to suit themselves? Nay, cease my
song!
For from the city Daphnis homeward comes.

ECLOGUE IX

LYCIDAS, MOERIS

- L. Where bound, my Moeris ? Runs thy road to town ?
- M. O Lycidas, today we live to see
Something we never feared — a foreigner
Holding our little farm, who harshly cries,
“ These lands are mine. Ye dwellers of old time,
Away with you ! ” And we submit to this,
We wretched ones; for Chance and Fortune’s power
Change all things. We are sending him today
Two kids — and may the gift no blessing be!
- L. Why, I had heard that where yon hills begin
Uprising, where the smooth, descending slopes
Sink to the valley and the waterside,
Past the old beech trees whose tall tops decay —
Menalcas sang so well he saved it all.
- M. ’Twas a wide-spread report. But poets’ songs
O Lycidas, when steel-clad Mars appears,
Are mighty as Dodona’s sacred doves
When swoops an eagle down. Save that to me
Shrill warning at all cost new feuds to shun
Came from a crow loud shrieking at my left
From hollow oak, hardly thy Moeris here
Nor even Menalcas were alive today.
- L. Ah ! whose such crime ? Came we so nigh to loss
Of our heart’s joy, Menalcas, and of thee ?
Who else the beauty of our nymphs would sing ?
Or strew the ground with blossoms, or embower

Our fountains with green shade ? Or who but thee
Would sing that song I lately overheard
When thou wert setting forth upon thy way
To Amaryllis, whom my heart adores ?
“ Till I come back, good Tityrus, I pray
Feed yonder goats. For I will not be long.
Drive to the brook when fed; but oh! beware!
That butting he-goat has a wicked horn.”

- M. Or that half-finished song in Varus’ praise:
“ O Varus, if our Mantua but be spared —
Ah me! a Mantua bordering far too near
On sad Cremona! — thine immortal name
Our soaring swans will starward lift in song.”
- L. So may thy bees ne’er taste Sardinian yew,
And may thy cows their swelling udders fill
With sweetest flowers! Begin, I pray, thy song,
Whate’er it be. Me too the Muses bred
To be a poet and my songs are known;
The shepherds hail me as a bard, but I
Heed not their praise nor boast myself to sing
Things worthy Varus or of Cinna. No!
I raise a goose-cry ’mongst melodious swans.
- M. In silence I am running o’er that song
To see if I remember. ’Tis most rare:
“ O Galatea, come! What pleasure bides
In yon cold waves ? Behold the blushing Spring
Is with us, and the meadow streams flow down
Through many a flower; a silvered poplar leans
Above my grotto, and the drooping vines
Make spots of shadow there. Oh hither come!
Leave yon wild, rolling waves that smite the shore.”

L. What was that strain I heard thee sing alone
One cloudless night ? The measure I recall,
But not the words.

M. " Why, Daphnis, asking still
What fate the ancient constellations bring ?
Behold the star of Caesar takes the sky,
Dione's heir; the star of fruitful fields,
That clothes the clusters on the sunny slopes
With purple pride. Go, Daphnis, graft thy pears !
Sons of thy sons shall gather them in joy."
Ah, time takes all we have, the memory too.
Oft in my boyhood, I remember well,
I spent long summer days in song; but now
The verses come not back; and even his voice
Is leaving Moeris. Probably some wolf
Set eye on Moeris first. No matter though!
Menalcas often will repeat it all.

L. Look how with words thou hast so long delayed
My heart's desire. Yonder outspread sea
Is listening and calm, and every wind
Its airy whisper stills. Here where we stand
Is halfway to the town; Bianor's tomb
Just rises into view; the rustics here
Have built a leafy shade. Here let us sing.
Here, Moeris, set the two kids on the ground.
We reach the town full soon. But if we fear
The night may meet us with a gathering rain
Let us go forward singing, for the path
Tires us less so. And that we may walk on
Still singing, let me ease thee of thy load.

M. Nay, Nay! good friend. Let us to business now!
Songs will be better with Menalcas by.

ECLOGUE X

GALLUS

Smile, Arethusa, on this parting lay!
'Tis for my Gallus. Let Lycoris hear!
Perforce I sing; for if my Gallus grieve,
Who could refuse a song? So may thy flood
That flows in secret through Sicilian seas
Mix with no bitter wave! Awake and sing
What love and cruel anguish Gallus knew.
My flat-nosed goats will crop the leafage green.
Yet sing we not unheard; the woods reply.

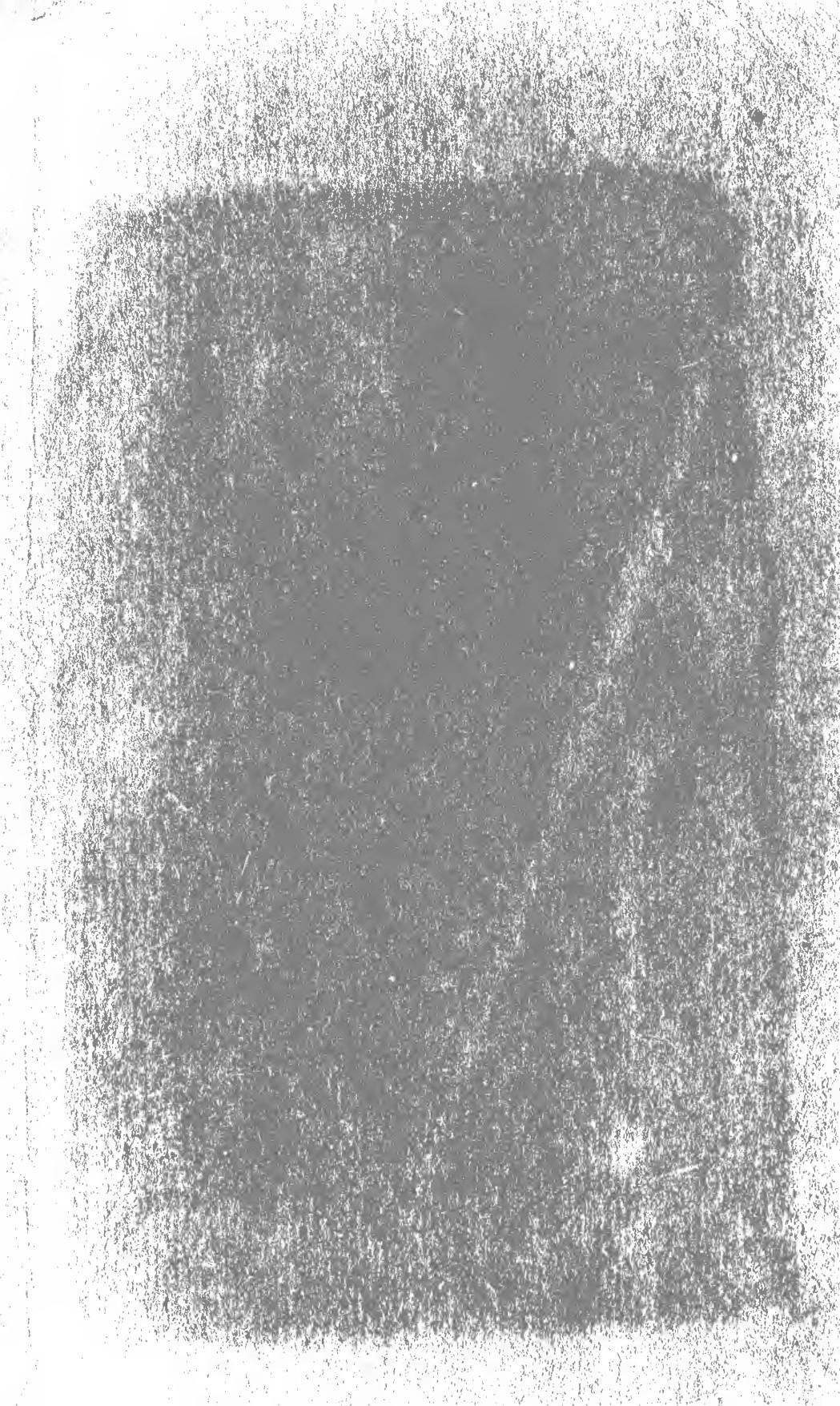
O pitying nymphs in what dim grove or glade
Stood ye far off while Gallus pined away
With unrequited love? What held your feet
On slope Parnassian or on Pindus' crest,
Or by th' Aonian rill? Their mournful tears
The laurel and the flowery tamarisk shed;
And where by some lone cliff he lay forlorn,
Pine-mantled Maenalus and stony steeps
Of cold Lycaeus mourned the shepherd's woe.
His flock stood round him, of our human tears
Not heedless or ashamed; nor shame feel thou,
O heavenly poet, that thou tendest sheep
As once Adonis in his beauty's pride
Pastured a flock beside a silver stream.
The herdsman came, and swineherds trudging slow,

Menalcas, too, his mantle drenched with dew,
Came from his acorn-gathering, and all asked
How such a passion grew. Apollo came:
“My Gallus, why this madness ? ” said the god,
“For fair Lycoris, thy fond heart’s desire,
Now at thy rival’s side is following him
Through northern snows and din of dreadful war.”
Silvanus came, wreathed with a rustic crown,
That shook with lilies large and fennel flowers.
Pan came, Arcadia’s god, — I knew him well —
Smeared red with elder juice and cinnabar,
“Canst thou not quit ? ” he cried, “Love heeds thee not!
For cruel Love feeds on a lover’s tears,
As grass on rain, or bees on honied flowers,
Or goats on leaves.” Then spoke the sad swain thus:
“Arcadian shepherds, in these hills some day
Ye will make verses on my love and tears.
Who but Arcadians have a voice to sing ?
Ah then how softly shall my bones repose
While your sweet pipes play forth my heart’s sad song !
Would I were one of you ! and of your flocks
A keeper, or could prune your purpling vines !
Surely had Phyllis ever been my love,
Amyntas, or whatever flame ye will —
(Say not ‘Amyntas is so dark and brown ! ’
Violets are dark and dark are hyacinths too)
In willow copses under trailing vines
My love and I would lie, while Phyllis there
Would weave me garlands and Amyntas sing.
Here, O Lycoris, are cool-flowing rills,
Here softest grass and haunts of woodland shade,

Here in thine arms my whole life long should be.
Now the blind passion of unpitying war
Clothes me in steel and bids me captive be
'Mid thronging swords and foes in stern array;
While thou in exile — would it all were lies! —
Lookest on snow-clad Alp and ice-bound Rhine
Alone, and not with me. Oh, harmless blow
The wintry winds! and from the sharp-edged ice
May thy white, lovely feet no wound receive!
I must away! and let Euphorion's strain,
My memory's treasure, lend some skilful note
To a Sicilian shepherd's untaught reed.
I am resolved in woods and caverns wild
To meet Love's sorrow, and to write its song
Upon the trees; then as these greater grow
So shall my faithful love. . And I will roam
Where voices of the wood-nymphs sweetly call
To windy Maenalus. Or savage boars
I will pursue; no frosty chill of morn
To me and my swift hounds shall make delay
As through Arcadian glades our hunting goes.
Already in my dreams I speed along
Through rock-bound pass and woodlands echoing far,
And shoot right merrily my Cretan barb
From horn-tipped Parthian bow. As if in this
Were medicine for my madness, or as if
That god could learn to pity human woe.
Nay! Nymph and song please me no more.
Farewell ye groves! Nothing we do moves him.
He will have no compassion, though we drink
The freezing stream of Hebrus, or should face

The Thracian snows and clouded wintry gloom;
Nor if we led our flocks where lofty trees
Shrivel with noonday heat, and where the star
Of Cancer burns o'er Aethiopian sands.
Love masters all. We, too, submit to love."

But now full long, O blest Pierian maids,
Your poet has been singing, while he wove
A basket of green mallow. By your aid
May all be fit to soothe our Gallus' ear!
Gallus, for whom my love and honor grow
Larger each hour, as in the prime of Spring
The alder leaf unfolds. But let us go!
The darkness of the night works hurtful change
Upon a shepherd's voice; the junipers
Love not the darkness, and the ripening fields
Thrive not in shadow. Home ye mother-goats!
Run home full-fed! Behold the evening-star!



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